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# OUR OWN TIMES

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LONDON

# A HISTORY

OF

# OUR OWN TIMES

FROM THE ACCESSION OF QUEEN VICTORIA
TO THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1880

BY

JUSTIN McCARTHY, M.P.

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I.

A NEW EDITION

WITH AN APPENDIX OF EVENTS TO THE END OF 1886

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# A HISTORY

OF

# OUR OWN TIMES.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE KING IS DEAD! LONG LIVE THE QUEEN!

Before half-past two o'clock on the morning of June 20, 1837, William IV. was lying dead in Windsor Castle, while the messengers were already hurrying off to Kensington Palace to bear to his successor her summons to the throne. The illness of the King had been but short, and at one time, even after it had been pronounced alarming, it seemed to take so hopeful a turn that the physicians began to think it would pass harmlessly away. But the King was an old man—was an old man even when he came to the throne, and when the dangerous symptoms again exhibited themselves, their warning was very soon followed by fulfilment. The death of King William may be fairly regarded as having closed an era of our history. With him, we may believe, ended the reign of personal government in England. William was indeed a constitutional king in more than mere name. He was to the best of his lights a faithful representative of the constitutional principle. He was as far in advance of his two predecessors in understanding and acceptance of the principle as his successor has proved herself beyond him. Constitutional government has developed itself gradually, as everything else has done in English politics. The written principle and code of its system it would be as vain to look for as for the British Constitution itself. King William still held to and exercised the right to dismiss his ministers when he pleased and because he pleased. His father had held to the right of maintaining favourite ministers in defiance of repeated votes of the House of Commons. It would not be easy to find any written rule or declaration of constitu-

tional law pronouncing decisively that either was in the wrong. But in our day we should believe that the constitutional freedom of England was outraged, or at least put in the extremest danger, if a sovereign were to dismiss a ministry at mere pleasure, or to retain it in despite of the expressed wish of the House of Commons. Virtually, therefore, there was still personal government in the reign of William IV. With his death the long chapter of its history came to an end. We find it difficult now to believe that it was a living principle, openly at work among us, if not openly acknowledged, so lately as in the reign of King William.

The closing scenes of King William's life were undoubtedly characterised by some personal dignity. As a rule, sovereigns show that they know how to die. Perhaps the necessary consequence of their training, by virtue of which they come to regard themselves always as the central figures in great state pageantry, is to make them assume a manner of dignity on all occasions when the eyes of their subjects may be supposed to be on them, even if the dignity of bearing is not the free gift of nature. The manners of William IV. had been, like those of most of his brothers, somewhat rough and overbearing. He had been an unmanageable naval officer. He had again and again disregarded or disobeyed orders, and at last it had been found convenient to withdraw him from active service altogether, and allow him to rise through the successive ranks of his profession by a merely formal and technical process of ascent. In his more private capacity he had, when younger, indulged more than once in unseemly and insufferable freaks of temper. He had made himself unpopular while Duke of Clarence by his strenuous opposition to some of the measures which were especially desired by all the enlightenment of the country. He was, for example, a determined opponent of the measures for the abolition of the slave trade. He had wrangled publicly, in open debate, with some of his brothers in the House of Lords; and words had been interchanged among the royal princes which could not be heard in our day even in the hottest debates of the more turbulent House of Commons. But William seems to have been one of the men whom increased responsibility improves. He was far better as a king than as a prince. He proved that he was able at least to understand that first duty of a constitutional sovereign which, to the last day of his active life, his father, George III., never could be brought to comprehend—that the personal predilections and prejudices of the King must sometimes give way to the public interest.

Nothing perhaps in life became him like to the leaving of it. His closing days were marked by gentleness and kindly consideration for the feelings of those around him. When he awoke on June 18 he remem-

bered that it was the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo. He expressed a strong, pathetic wish to live over that day, even if he were never to see another sunset. He called for the flag which the Duke of Wellington always sent him on that anniversary in homage for Strathfieldsaye, and he laid his hand upon the eagle which adorned it and said he felt revived by the touch. He had himself attended since his accession the Waterloo banquet; but this time the Duke of Wellington thought it would perhaps be more seemly to have the dinner put off, and sent accordingly to take the wishes of his Majesty. The King declared that the dinner must go on as usual, and sent to the Duke a friendly, simple message, expressing his hope that the guests might have a pleasant day. He talked in his homely way to those about him, his direct language seeming to acquire a sort of tragic dignity from the approach of the death that was so near. He had prayers read to him again and again, and called those near him to witness that he had always been a faithful believer in the truths of religion. He had his despatch-boxes brought to him, and tried to get through some business with his private secretary. It was remarked with some interest that the last official act he ever performed was to sign with his trembling hand the pardon of a condemned criminal. Even a far nobler reign than his would have received new dignity if it closed with a deed of mercy. When some of those around him endeavoured to encourage him with the idea that he might recover and live many years yet, he declared, with a simplicity which had something oddly pathetic in it, that he would be willing to live ten years yet for the sake of the country. The poor King was evidently under the sincere conviction that England could hardly get on without him. His consideration for his country, whatever whimsical thoughts it may suggest, is entitled to some at least of the respect which we give to the dying groan of a Pitt or a Mirabeau, who fears, with too much reason, that he leaves a blank not easily to be filled. 'Young royal tarry-breeks,' William had been jocularly called by Robert Burns fifty years before, when there was yet a popular belief that he would come all right and do brilliant and gallant things, and become a stout sailor in whom a seafaring nation might feel pride. He disappointed all such expectations; but it must be owned that when responsibility came upon him he disappointed expectation anew in a different way, and was a better sovereign, more deserving of the complimentary title of patriot-king, than even his friends would have ventured to anticipate.

There were eulogies pronounced upon him after his death in both Houses of Parliament as a matter of course. It is not necessary, however, to set down to mere court homage or parliamentary form some of the praises that were bestowed on the dead King by Lord Melbourne and Lord

Brougham and Lord Grey. A certain tone of sincerity, not quite free perhaps from surprise, appears to run through some of these expressions of admiration. They seem to say that the speakers were at one time or another considerably surprised to find that, after all, William really was able and willing on grave occasions to subordinate his personal likings and dislikings to considerations of State policy and to what was shown to him to be for the good of the nation. In this sense at least he may be called a patriot-king. We have advanced a good deal since that time, and we require somewhat higher and more positive qualities in a sovereign now to excite our political wonder. But we must judge William by the reigns that went before, and not the reign that came after him; and, with that consideration borne in mind, we may accept the panegyric of Lord Melbourne and of Lord Grey, and admit that on the whole he was better than his education, his early opportunities, and his early promise.

William IV. (third son of George III.) had left no children who could have succeeded to the throne, and the crown passed therefore to the daughter of his brother (fourth son of George), the Duke of Kent. This was the Princess Alexandrina Victoria, who was born at Kensington Palace on May 24, 1819. The princess was therefore at this time little more than eighteen years of age. The Duke of Kent died a few months after the birth of his daughter, and the child was brought up under the care of his widow. She was well brought up: both as regards her intellect and her character her training was excellent. She was taught to be self-reliant, brave, and systematical. Prudence and economy were inculcated on her as though she had been born to be poor. One is not generally inclined to attach much importance to what historians tell us of the education of contemporary princes or princesses; but it cannot be doubted that the Princess Victoria was trained for intelligence and goodness.

'The death of the King of England has everywhere caused the greatest sensation. . . . Cousin Victoria is said to have shown astonishing self-possession. She undertakes a heavy responsibility, especially at the present moment, when parties are so excited, and all rest their hopes on her.' These words are an extract from a letter written on July 4, 1837, by the late Prince Albert, the Prince Consort of so many happy years. The letter was written to the Prince's father, from Bonn. The young Queen had indeed behaved with remarkable self-possession. There is a pretty description, which has been often quoted, but will bear citing once more, given by Miss Wynn of the manner in which the young sovereign received the news of her accession to a throne. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Howley, and the Lord Chamberlain, the Marquis of

Conyngham, left Windsor for Kensington Palace, where the Princess Victoria had been residing, to inform her of the King's death. It was two hours after midnight when they started, and they did not reach Kensington until five o'clock in the morning. 'They knocked, they rang, they thumped for a considerable time before they could rouse the porter at the gate; they were again kept waiting in the courtyard, then turned into one of the lower rooms, where they seemed forgotten by everybody. They rang the bell, and desired that the attendant of the Princess Victoria might be sent to inform her Royal Highness that they requested an audience on business of importance. After another delay, and another ringing to inquire the cause, the attendant was summoned, who stated that the Princess was in such a sweet sleep that she could not venture to disturb her. Then they said, "We are come on business of state to the Queen, and even her sleep must give way to that." It did; and to prove that she did not keep them waiting, in a few minutes she came into the room in a loose white nightgown and shawl, her nightcap thrown off, and her hair falling upon her shoulders, her feet in slippers, tears in her eyes, but perfectly collected and dignified.' The Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, was presently sent for, and a meeting of the Privy Council summoned for eleven o'clock, when the Lord Chancellor administered the usual oaths to the Queen, and her Majesty received in return the oaths of allegiance of the Cabinet ministers and other privy councillors present. Mr. Greville, who was usually as little disposed to record any enthusiastic admiration of royalty and royal personages as Humboldt or Varnhagen von Ense could have been, has described the scene in words well worthy of quotation.

'The King died at twenty minutes after two yesterday morning, and the young Queen met the Council at Kensington Palace at eleven. Never was anything like the first impression she produced, or the chorus of praise and admiration which it raised about her manner and behaviour; and certainly not without justice. It was very extraordinary, and something far beyond what was looked for. Her extreme youth and inexperience, and the ignorance of the world concerning her, naturally excited intense curiosity to see how she would act on this trying occasion, and there was a considerable assemblage at the palace, notwithstanding the short notice which was given. The first thing to be done was to teach her her lesson, which, for this purpose, Melbourne had himself to learn. . . . She bowed to the lords, took her seat, and then read her speech in a clear, distinct, and audible voice, and without any appearance of fear or embarrassment. She was quite plainly dressed, and in mourning. After she had read her speech, and taken and signed the oath for the security of

the Church of Scotland, the privy councillors were sworn, the two royal dukes first by themselves; and as these two old men, her uncles, knelt before her, swearing allegiance and kissing her hand, I saw her blush up to the eyes, as if she felt the contrast between their civil and their natural relations, and this was the only sign of emotion which she evinced. Her manner to them was very graceful and engaging; she kissed them both, and rose from her chair and moved towards the Duke of Sussex, who was farthest from her, and too infirm to reach her. She seemed rather bewildered at the multitude of men who were sworn, and who came, one after anotner, to kiss her hand, but she did not speak to anybody, nor did she make the slightest difference in her manner, or show any in her countenance, to any individual of any rank, station or party. I particularly watched her when Melbourne and the ministers, and the Duke of Wellington and Peel approached her. She went through the whole ceremony, occasionally looking at Melbourne for instruction when she had any doubt what to do, which hardly ever occurred, and with perfect calmness and self-possession, but at the same time with a graceful modesty and propriety particularly interesting and ingratiating.'

Sir Robert Peel told Mr. Greville that he was amazed at 'her manner and behaviour, at her apparent deep sense of her situation, and at the same time her firmness.' The Duke of Wellington said in his blunt way that if she had been his own daughter he could not have desired to see her perform her part better. 'At twelve,' says Mr. Greville, 'she held a Council, at which she presided with as much ease as if she had been doing nothing else all her life; and though Lord Lansdowne and my colleague had contrived between them to make some confusion with the Council papers, she was not put out by it. She looked very well; and though so small in stature, and without much pretension to beauty, the gracefulness of her manner and the good expression of her countenance give her on the whole a very agreeable appearance, and with her youth inspire an excessive interest in all who approach her, and which I can't help feeling myself. . . . In short, she appears to act with every sort of good taste and good feeling, as well as good sense; and as far as it has gone nothing can be more favourable than the impression she has made, and nothing can promise better than her manner and conduct do; though,' Mr. Greville somewhat superfluously adds, 'it would be rash to count too confidently upon her judgment and discretion in more weighty matters.'

The interest or curiosity with which the demeanour of the young Queen was watched was all the keener because the world in general knew so little about her. Not merely was the world in general thus ignorant, but even the statesmen and officials in closest communication with court

circles were in almost absolute ignorance. According to Mr. Greville, whose authority, however, is not to be taken too implicitly except as to matters which he actually saw, the young Queen had been previously kept in such seclusion by her mother—'never,' he says, 'having slept out of her bedroom, nor been alone with anybody but herself and the Baroness Lehzen'—that 'not one of her acquaintance, none of the attendants at Kensington, not even the Duchess of Northumberland, her governess, have any idea what she is or what she promises to be.' There was enough in the court of the two sovereigns who went before Queen Victoria to justify any strictness of seclusion which the Duchess of Kent might desire for her daughter. George IV. was a Charles II. without the education or the talents; William IV. was a Frederick William of Prussia without the genius. The ordinary manners of the society at the court of either had a full flavour, to put it in the softest way, such as a decent taproom would hardly exhibit in a time like the present. No one can read even the most favourable descriptions given by contemporaries of the manners of those two courts without feeling grateful to the Duchess of Kent for resolving that her daughter should see as little as possible of their ways and their company.

It was remarked with some interest that the Queen subscribed herself simply 'Victoria,' and not, as had been expected, 'Alexandrina Victoria.' Mr. Greville mentions in his diary of December 24, 1819, that 'the Duke of Kent gave the name of Alexandrina to his daughter in compliment to the Emperor of Russia. She was to have had the name of Georgiana, but the Duke insisted upon Alexandrina being her first name. The Regent sent for Lieven' (the Russian ambassador, husband of the famous Princess de Lieven), 'and made him a great many compliments, *en le persiflant*, on the Emperor's being godfather, but informed him that the name of Georgiana could be second to no other in this country, and therefore she could not bear it at all.' It was a very wise choice to employ simply the name of Victoria, around which no ungenial associations of any kind hung at that time, and which can have only grateful associations in the history of this country for the future.

It is not necessary to go into any formal description of the various ceremonials and pageantries which celebrated the accession of the new sovereign. The proclamation of the Queen, her appearance for the first time on the throne in the House of Lords when she prorogued Parliament in person, and even the gorgeous festival of her coronation, which took place on June 28, in the following year, 1838, may be passed over with a mere word of record. It is worth mentioning, however, that at the coronation procession one of the most conspicuous figures was that of Marshal

Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, the opponent of Moore and Wellington in the Peninsula, the commander of the Old Guard at Lützen, and one of the strong arms of Napoleon at Waterloo. Soult had been sent as ambassador-extraordinary to represent the French Government and people at the coronation of Queen Victoria, and nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which he was received by the crowds in the streets of London on that day. The white-haired soldier was cheered wherever a glimpse of his face or figure could be caught. He appeared in the procession in a carriage, the frame of which had been used on occasions of state by some of the princes of the House of Condé, and which Soult had had splendidly decorated for the ceremony of the coronation. Even the Austrian ambassador, says an eyewitness, attracted less attention than Soult, although the dress of the Austrian, Prince Esterhazy, 'down to his very boot heels sparkled with diamonds.' The comparison savours now of the ridiculous, but is remarkably expressive and effective. Prince Esterhazy's name in those days suggested nothing but diamonds. His diamonds may be said to glitter through all the light literature of the time. When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wanted a comparison with which to illustrate excessive splendour and brightness, she found it in 'Governor Pitt's diamonds.' Prince Esterhazy's served the same purpose for the writers of the early years of the present reign. It was therefore, perhaps, no very poor tribute to the stout old *moustache* of the Republic and the Empire to say that at a London pageant his war-worn face drew attention away from Prince Esterhazy's diamonds. Soult himself felt very warmly the genuine kindness of the reception given to him. Years after, in a debate in the French Chamber, when M. Guizot was accused of too much partiality for the English alliance, Marshal Soult declared himself a warm champion of that alliance. 'I fought the English down to Toulouse,' he said, 'when I fired the last cannon in defence of the national independence; in the meantime I have been in London, and France knows the reception which I had there. The English themselves cried "Vive Soult!"—they cried, "Soult for ever!" I had learned to estimate the English on the field of battle; I have learned to estimate them in peace; and I repeat that I am a warm partisan of the English alliance.' History is not exclusively made by cabinets and professional diplomatists. It is highly probable that the cheers of a London crowd on the day of the Queen's coronation did something genuine and substantial to restore the good feeling between this country and France, and efface the bitter memories of Waterloo.

It is a fact well worthy of note amid whatever records of court ceremonial and of political change, that a few days after the accession of the Queen, Mr. Montefiore was elected Sheriff of London, the first Jew who

had ever been chosen for that office; and that he received knighthood at the hands of her Majesty when she visited the city on the following Lord Mayor's day. He was the first Jew whom royalty had honoured in this country since the good old times when royalty was pleased to borrow the Jew's money, or order instead the extraction of his teeth. The expansion of the principle of religious liberty and equality which has been one of the most remarkable characteristics of the reign of Queen Victoria, could hardly have been more becomingly inaugurated than by the compliment which sovereign and city paid to Sir Moses Montefiore.

The first signature attached to the Act of Allegiance presented to the Queen at Kensington Palace was that of her eldest surviving uncle, Ernest, Duke of Cumberland. The fact may be taken as an excuse for introducing a few words here to record the severance that then took place between the interests of this country, or at least the reigning family of these realms, and another State, which had for a long time been bound up together in a manner seldom satisfactory to the English people. In the whole history of England it will be observed that few things have provoked greater popular dissatisfaction than the connection of a reigning family with the crown or rulership of some foreign State. There is an instinctive jealousy on such a point, which even when it is unreasonable is not unnatural. A sovereign of England had better be sovereign of England, and of no foreign State. Many favourable auspices attended the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne; some at least of these were associated with her sex. The country was in general disposed to think that the accession of a woman to the throne would somewhat clarify and purify the atmosphere of the Court. It had another good effect as well, and one of a strictly political nature. It severed the connection which had existed for some generations between this country and Hanover. The connection was only personal, the successive kings of England being also by succession sovereigns of Hanover.

The crown of Hanover was limited in its descent to the male line, and it passed on the death of William IV. to his eldest surviving brother, Ernest, Duke of Cumberland. The change was in almost every way satisfactory to the English people. The indirect connection between England and Hanover had at no time been a matter of gratification to the public of this country. Many cooler and more enlightened persons than honest Squire Western had viewed with disfavour, and at one time with distrust, the division of interests which the ownership of the two crowns seemed almost of necessity to create in our English sovereigns. Besides, it must be owned that the people of this country were not by any means sorry to be rid of the Duke of Cumberland. Not many of George III.'s sons were popular; the Duke of Cumberland was probably the least popular

of all. He was believed by many persons to have had something more than an indirect, or passive, or innocent share in the Orange plot, discovered and exposed by Joseph Hume in 1835, for setting aside the claims of the young Princess Victoria and putting himself, the Duke of Cumberland, on the throne; a scheme which its authors pretended to justify by the preposterous assertion that they feared the Duke of Wellington would otherwise seize the crown for himself. His manners were rude, overbearing, and sometimes even brutal. He had personal habits which seemed rather fitted for the days of Tiberius, or for the court of Peter the Great, than for the time and sphere to which he belonged. Rumour not unnaturally exaggerated his defects, and in the mouths of many his name was the symbol of the darkest and fiercest passions, and even crimes. Some of the popular reports with regard to him had their foundation only in the common detestation of his character and dread of his influence. But it is certain that he was profligate, selfish, overbearing and quarrelsome. A man with these qualities would usually be described in fiction as, at all events, bluntly honest and outspoken; but the Duke of Cumberland was deceitful and treacherous. He was outspoken in his abuse of those with whom he quarrelled, and in his style of anecdote and jocular conversation; but in no other sense. The Duke of Wellington, whom he hated, told Mr. Greville that he once asked George IV. why the Duke of Cumberland was so unpopular, and the King replied, 'Because there never was a father well with his son, or husband with his wife, or lover with his mistress, or friend with his friend, that he did not try to make mischief between them.' The first thing he did on his accession to the throne of Hanover was to abrogate the constitution which had been agreed to by the Estates of the kingdom, and sanctioned by the late King, William IV. 'Radicalism,' said the King, writing to an English nobleman, 'has been here all the order of the day, and all the lower class appointed to office were more or less imbued with these laudable principles. . . . But I have cut the wings of this democracy.' He went indeed pretty vigorously to work, for he dismissed from their offices seven of the most distinguished professors of the University of Göttingen, because they signed a protest against his arbitrary abrogation of the constitution. Among the men thus pushed from their stools were—Gervinus, the celebrated historian and Shakespearian critic, at that time professor of history and literature; Ewald, the orientalist and theologian; Jacob Grimm; and Frederick Dahlmann, professor of political science. Gervinus, Grimm and Dahlmann were not merely deprived of their offices, but were actually sent into exile. The exiles were accompanied across the frontier by an immense concourse of students, who gave them a triumphant *Geleit* in true student fashion, and

converted what was meant for degradation and punishment into a procession of honour. The offence against all rational principles of civil government in these arbitrary proceedings on the part of the new King was the more flagrant because it could not even be pretended that the professors were interfering with political matters outside their province, or that they were issuing manifestoes calculated to disturb the public peace. The University of Göttingen at that time sent a representative to the Estates of the kingdom, and the protest to which the seven professors attached their names was addressed to the academical senate, and simply declared that they would take no part in the ensuing election, because of the suspension of the constitution. All this led to somewhat serious disturbances in Hanover, which it needed the employment of military force to suppress.

It was felt in England that the mere departure of the Duke of Cumberland from this country would have made the severance of the connection with Hanover desirable, even if it had not been in other ways an advantage to us. Later times have shown how much we have gained by the separation. It would have been exceedingly inconvenient, to say the least, if the crown worn by a sovereign of England had been hazarded in the war between Austria and Prussia in 1866. Our reigning family must have seemed to suffer in dignity, if that crown had been roughly knocked off the head of its wearer who happened to be an English sovereign; and it would have been absurd to expect that the English people could engage in a quarrel with which their interests and honour had absolutely nothing to do, for the sake of a mere family possession of their ruling house.

Looking back from this distance of time and across a change of political and social manners far greater than the distance of time might seem to explain, it appears difficult to understand the passionate emotions which the accession of the young Queen seems to have excited on all sides. Some influential and prominent politicians talked and wrote as if there were really a possibility of the Tories attempting a revolution in favour of the Hanoverian branch of the royal family; as if some such crisis had again come round as that which tried the nation when Queen Anne died. On the other hand, there were heard loud and shrill cries that the Queen was destined to be conducted by her constitutional advisers into a precipitate pathway leading sheer down into popery and anarchy. The *Times* insisted that 'the anticipations of certain Irish Roman Catholics respecting the success of their warfare against Church and State under the auspices of these not untried ministers into whose hands the all but infant Queen has been compelled by her unhappy condition to deliver herself and her indignant people are to be taken for nothing, and as nothing, but the chimeras of a band of visionary traitors.' The *Times* even thought it necessary to

point out that for her Majesty to turn papist, to marry a papist, 'or in any manner follow the footsteps of the Coburg family whom these incendiaries describe as papists,' would involve an 'immediate forfeiture of the British crown.' On the other hand, some of the Radical, and more especially Irish papers talked in the plainest terms of Tory plots to depose or even to assassinate the Queen and put the Duke of Cumberland in her place. O'Connell, the great Irish agitator, declared in a public speech that if it were necessary he could get 'five hundred thousand brave Irishmen to defend the life, the honour, and the person of the beloved young lady by whom England's throne is now filled.' Mr. Henry Grattan, the son of the famous orator, and like his father a Protestant, declared at a meeting in Dublin, that 'if her Majesty were once fairly placed in the hands of the Tories, I would not give an orange peel for her life.' He even went on to put his rhetorical declaration into a more distinct form: 'If some of the low miscreants of the party got round her Majesty and had the mixing of the royal bowl at night, I fear she would have a long sleep.' This language seems almost too absurd for sober record, and yet was hardly more absurd than many things said on what may be called the other side. A Mr. Bradshaw, Tory member for Canterbury, declared at a public meeting in that ancient city that the sheet-anchor of the Liberal Ministry was the body of 'Irish papists and rapparees whom the priests return to the House of Commons.' 'These are the men who represent the bigoted savages, hardly more civilised than the natives of New Zealand, but animated with a fierce, undying hatred of England. Yet on these men are bestowed the countenance and support of the Queen of Protestant England. For, alas! her Majesty is Queen only of a faction, and is as much of a partisan as the Lord Chancellor himself.' At a Conservative dinner in Lancashire, a speaker denounced the Queen and her ministers on the same ground so vehemently, that the Commander-in-Chief addressed a remonstrance to some military officers who were among the guests at this excited banquet, pointing out to them the serious responsibility they incurred by remaining in any assembly when such language was uttered and such sentiments were expressed.

No one, of course, would take impassioned and inflated harangues of this kind on either side as a representation of the general feeling. Sober persons all over the country must have known perfectly well that there was not the slightest fear that the young Queen would turn a Roman Catholic, or that her Ministry intended to deliver the country up as a prey to Rome. Sober persons everywhere, too, must have known equally well that there was no longer the slightest cause to feel any alarm about a Tory plot to hand over the throne of England to the detested Duke of Cumber-

land. We only desire in quoting such outrageous declarations to make more clear the condition of the public mind, and to show what the state of the political world must have been when such extragavance and such delusions were possible. We have done this partly to show what were the trials and difficulties under which her Majesty came to the throne, and partly for the mere purpose of illustrating the condition of the country and of political education. There can be no doubt that all over the country passion and ignorance were at work to make the task of constitutional government peculiarly difficult. A vast number of the followers of the Tories in country places really believed that the Liberals were determined to hurry the Sovereign into some policy tending to the degradation of the monarchy. If any cool and enlightened reasoner were to argue with them on this point and endeavour to convince them of the folly of ascribing such purposes to a number of English statesmen, whose interests, position, and honour were absolutely bound up with the success and the glory of the State, the indignant and unreasoning Tories would be able to cite the very words of so great and so sober-minded a statesman as Sir Robert Peel, who in his famous speech to the electors of Tamworth promised to rescue the Constitution from being made the 'victim of false friends,' and the country from being 'trampled under the hoof of a ruthless democracy.' If, on the other hand, a sensible person were to try to persuade hot-headed people on the opposite side that it was absurd to suppose the Tories really meant any harm to the freedom and the peace of the country and the security of the succession, he might be invited with significant expression to read the manifesto issued by Lord Durham to the electors of Sunderland, in which that eminent statesman declared that 'in all circumstances, at all hazards, be the personal consequences what they may,' he would ever be found ready when called upon to defend the principles on which the constitution of the country was then settled. We know now very well that Sir Robert Peel and Lord Durham were using the language of innocent metaphor. Sir Robert Peel did not really fear much the hoof of the ruthless democracy; Lord Durham did not actually expect to be called upon at any terrible risk to himself to fight the battle of freedom on English soil. But when those whose minds had been bewildered and whose passions had been inflamed by the language of the *Times* on the one side, and that of O'Connell on the other, came to read the calmer and yet sufficiently impassioned words of responsible statesmen like Sir Robert Peel and Lord Durham, they might be excused if they found rather a confirmation than a refutation of their arguments and their fears.

The truth is, that the country was in a very excited condition, and that it is easy to imagine a succession of events which might in a moment

have thrown it into utter confusion. At home and abroad things were looking ominous for the new reign. To begin with, the last two reigns had, on the whole, done much to loosen not only the personal feeling of allegiance, but even the general confidence in the virtue of monarchical rule. The old plan of personal government had become an anomaly, and the system of a genuine constitutional government, such as we know, had not yet been tried. The very manner in which the Reform Bill had been carried, the political stratagem which had been resorted to when further resistance seemed dangerous, was not likely to exalt in popular estimate the value of what was then gracefully called constitutional government. Only a short time before the country had seen Catholic Emancipation conceded, not from a sense of justice on the part of ministers, but avowedly because further resistance must lead to civil disturbance. There was not much in all this to impress an intelligent and independent people with a sense of the great wisdom of the rulers of the country, or of the indispensable advantages of the system which they represented. Social discontent prevailed almost everywhere. Economic laws were hardly understood by the country in general. Class interests were fiercely arrayed against each other. The cause of each man's class filled him with a positive fanaticism. He was not a mere selfish and grasping partisan, but he sincerely believed that each other class was arrayed against his, and that the natural duty of self-defence and self-preservation compelled him to stand firmly by his own.

## CHAPTER II.

### STATESMEN AND PARTIES.

Lord Melbourne was the First Minister of the Crown when the Queen succeeded to the throne. He was a man who then and always after made himself particularly dear to the Queen, and for whom she had the strongest regard. He was of kindly, somewhat indolent nature; fair and even generous towards his political opponents; of the most genial disposition towards his friends. He was emphatically not a strong man. He was not a man to make good grow where it was not already growing, to adopt the expression of a great author. Long before that time his eccentric wife, Lady Caroline Lamb, had excused herself for some of her follies and frailties by pleading that her husband was not a man to watch over anyone's morals. He was a kindly counsellor to a young Queen; and, happily for herself, the young Queen in this case had strong clear sense enough of her

own not to be absolutely dependent on any counsel. Lord Melbourne was not a statesman. His best qualities, personal kindness and good nature apart, were purely negative. He was unfortunately not content even with the reputation for a sort of indolent good nature which he might have well deserved. He strove to make himself appear hopelessly idle, trivial, and careless. When he really was serious and earnest he seemed to make it his business to look like one in whom no human affairs could call up a gleam of interest. He became the *fanfaron* of levities which he never had. We have amusing pictures of him as he occupied himself in blowing a feather or nursing a sofa-cushion while receiving an important and perhaps highly sensitive deputation from this or that commercial 'interest.' Those who knew him insisted that he really was listening with all his might and main; that he had sat up the whole night before, studying the question which he seemed to think so unworthy of any attention; and that so far from being, like Horace, wholly absorbed in his trifles, he was at very great pains to keep up the appearance of a trifler. A brilliant critic has made a lively and amusing attack on this alleged peculiarity. 'If the truth must be told,' says Sydney Smith, our viscount is somewhat of an impostor. Everything about him seems to betoken careless desolation; any one would suppose from his manner that he was playing at chuck-farthing with human happiness; that he was always on the heel of pastime; that he would giggle away the Great Charter, and decide by the method of teetotum whether my lords the bishops should or should not retain their seats in the House of Lords. All this is but the mere vanity of surprising, and making us believe that he can play with kingdoms as other men can with ninepins. . . . I am sorry to hurt any man's feelings, and to brush away the magnificent fabric of levity and gaiety he has reared; but I accuse our minister of honesty and diligence; I deny that he is careless or rash: he is nothing more than a man of good understanding and good principle, disguised in the eternal and somewhat wearisome affectation of a political *roué*.'

Such a masquerading might perhaps have been excusable, or even attractive, in the case of a man of really brilliant and commanding talents. Lookers-on are always rather apt to be fascinated by the spectacle of a man of well-recognised strength and force of character playing for the moment the part of an indolent trifler. The contrast is charming in a brilliant Prince Hal or such a Sardanapalus as Byron drew. In our own time a considerable amount of the popularity of Lord Palmerston was inspired by the amusing antagonism between his assumed levity and his well-known force of intellect and strength of will. But in Lord Melbourne's case the affectation had no such excuse or happy effect. He was

not by any means a Palmerston. He was only fitted to rule in the quietest times. He was a poor speaker, utterly unable to encounter the keen penetrating criticisms of Lyndhurst or the vehement and remorseless invectives of Brougham. Debates were then conducted with a bitterness of personality unknown, or at all events very rarely known, in our days. Even in the House of Lords language was often interchanged of the most virulent hostility. The rushing impetuosity and fury of Brougham's style had done much then to inflame the atmosphere which in our days is usually so cool and moderate.

It probably added to the warmth of the attacks on the Ministry of Lord Melbourne that the Prime Minister was supposed to be an especial favourite with the young Queen. When Victoria came to the throne the Duke of Wellington gave frank expression to his feelings as to the future of his party. He was of opinion that the Tories would never have any chance with a young woman for sovereign. 'I have no small talk,' he said, 'and Peel has no manners.' It had probably not occurred to the Duke of Wellington to think that a woman could be capable of as sound a constitutional policy and could show as little regard for personal predilections in the business of government as any man. All this, however, only tended to embitter the feeling against the Whig Government. Lord Melbourne's constant attendance on the young Queen was regarded with keen jealousy and dissatisfaction. According to some critics the Prime Minister was endeavouring to inspire her with all his own gay heedlessness of character and temperament. According to others, Lord Melbourne's purpose was to make himself agreeable and indispensable to the Queen; to surround her with his friends, relations and creatures, and thus to get a lifelong hold of power in England, in defiance of political changes and parties. It is curious now to look back on much that was said in the political and personal heats and bitternesses of the time. If Lord Melbourne had been a French mayor of the palace, whose real object was to make himself virtual ruler of the State and to hold the Sovereign as a puppet in his hands, there could not have been greater anger, fear and jealousy. Since that time we have all learned on the very best authority that Lord Melbourne actually was himself the person to advise the Queen to show some confidence in the Tories—to 'hold out the olive branch a little to them,' as he expressed it. He does not appear to have been greedy of power, or to have used any unfair means of getting or keeping it. The character of the young Sovereign seems to have impressed him deeply. His real or affected levity gave way to a genuine and lasting desire to make her life as happy and her reign as successful as he could. The Queen always felt the warmest affection and gratitude for him, and showed

it long after the public had given up the suspicion that she could be a puppet in the hands of a minister.

Still, it is certain that the Queen's Prime Minister was by no means a popular man at the time of her accession. Even observers who had no political or personal interest whatever in the condition of cabinets were displeased to see the opening of the new reign so much to all appearance under the influence of one who either was or tried to be a mere lounger. The deputations went away offended and disgusted when Lord Melbourne played with feathers or dandled sofa-cushions in their presence. The almost fierce energy and strenuousness of a man like Brougham showed in overwhelming contrast to the happy-go-lucky airs and graces of the Premier. It is likely that there was quite as much of affectation in the one case as in the other; but the affectation of a devouring zeal for the public service told at least far better than the other in the heat and stress of debate. When the new reign began, the Ministry had two enemies or critics in the House of Lords of the most formidable character. Either alone would have been a trouble to a minister of far stronger mould than Lord Melbourne; but circumstances threw them both for the moment into a chance alliance against him.

One of these was Lord Brougham. No stronger and stranger a figure than his is described in the modern history of England. He was gifted with the most varied and striking talents, and with a capacity for labour which sometimes seemed almost superhuman. Not merely had he the capacity for labour, but he appeared to have a positive passion for work. His restless energy seemed as if it must stretch itself out on every side seeking new fields of conquest. The study that was enough to occupy the whole time and wear out the frame of other men was only recreation to him. He might have been described as one possessed by a very demon of work. His physical strength never gave way. His high spirits never deserted him. His self-confidence was boundless. He thought he knew everything and could do everything better than any other man. He delighted in giving evidence that he understood the business of the specialist better than the specialist himself. His vanity was overweening, and made him ridiculous almost as often and as much as his genius made him admired. The comic literature of more than a generation had no subject more fruitful than the vanity and restlessness of Lord Brougham. He was beyond doubt a great Parliamentary orator. His style was too diffuse and sometimes too uncouth to suit a day like our own, when form counts for more than substance, when passion seems out of place in debate, and not to exaggerate is far more the object than to try to be great. Brough-

am's action was wild, and sometimes even furious; his gestures were singularly ungraceful; his manners were grotesque; but of his power over his hearers there could be no doubt. That power remained with him until a far later date; and long after the years when men usually continue to take part in political debate, Lord Brougham could be impassioned, impressive, and even overwhelming. He was not an orator of the highest class: his speeches have not stood the test of time. Apart from the circumstances of the hour and the personal power of the speaker, they could hardly arouse any great delight, or even interest; for they are by no means models of English style, and they have little of that profound philosophical interest, that pregnancy of thought and meaning, and that splendour of eloquence, which make the speeches of Burke always classic, and even in a certain sense always popular among us. In truth no man could have done with abiding success all the things which Brougham did successfully for the hour. On law, on politics, on literature, on languages, on science, on art, on industrial and commercial enterprise, he professed to pronounce with the authority of a teacher. 'If Brougham knew a little of law,' said O'Connell when the former became Lord Chancellor, 'he would know a little of everything.' The anecdote is told in another way too, which perhaps makes it even more piquant. 'The new Lord Chancellor knows a little of everything in the world—even of law.'

Brougham's was an excitable and self-asserting nature. He had during many years shown himself an embodied influence, a living speaking force in the promotion of great political and social reforms. If his talents were great, if his personal vanity was immense, let it be said that his services to the cause of human freedom and education were simply inestimable. As an opponent of slavery in the colonies, as an advocate of political reform at home, of law reform, of popular education, of religious equality, he had worked with indomitable zeal, with resistless passion, and with splendid success. But his career passed through two remarkable changes which to a great extent interfered with the full efficacy of his extraordinary powers. The first was when from popular tribune and reformer he became Lord Chancellor in 1830; the second was when he was left out of office on the reconstruction of the Whig Ministry in April 1835, and he passed for the remainder of his life into the position of an independent or unattached critic of the measures and policy of other men. It has never been clearly known why the Whigs so suddenly through over Brougham. The common belief is that his eccentricities and his almost savage temper made him intolerable in a cabinet. It has been darkly hinted that for a while his intellect was actually under a cloud, as people said that of Chatham was during a momentous season.

Lord Brougham was not a man likely to forget or forgive the wrong which he must have believed that he had sustained at the hands of the Whigs. He became the fiercest and most formidable of Lord Melbourne's hostile critics.

The other opponent who has been spoken of was Lord Lyndhurst. Lord Lyndhurst resembled Lord Brougham in the length of his career and in capacity for work, if in nothing else. Lyndhurst, who was born in Boston the year before the tea ships were boarded in that harbour and their cargoes flung into the water, has been heard addressing the House of Lords in all vigour and fluency by men who are yet far from middle age. He was one of the most effective Parliamentary debaters of a time which has known such men as Peel and Palmerston, Gladstone and Disraeli, Bright and Cobden. His style was singularly and even severely clear, direct and pure; his manner was easy and graceful; his voice remarkably sweet and strong. Nothing could have been in greater contrast than his clear, correct, nervous argument, and the impassioned invectives and overwhelming strength of Brougham. Lyndhurst had, as has been said, an immense capacity for work, when the work had to be done; but his natural tendency was as distinctly towards indolence as Brougham's was towards unresting activity. Nor were Lyndhurst's political convictions ever very clear. By the habitude of associating with the Tories, and receiving office from them, and speaking for them, and attacking their enemies with argument and sarcasm, Lyndhurst finally settled down into all the ways of Toryism. But nothing in his varied history showed that he had any particular preference that way; and there were many passages in his career when it would seem as if a turn of chance decided what path of political life he was to follow. As a keen debater he was perhaps hardly ever excelled in Parliament; but he had neither the passion nor the genius of the orator; and his capacity was narrow indeed in its range when compared with the astonishing versatility and omnivorous mental activity of Brougham. As a speaker he was always equal. He seemed to know no varying moods or fits of mental lassitude. Whenever he spoke he reached at once the same high level as a debater. The very fact may in itself perhaps be taken as conclusive evidence that he was not an orator. The higher qualities of the orator are no more to be summoned at will than those of the poet.

These two men were without any comparison the two leading debaters in the House of Lords. Lord Melbourne had not at that time in the Upper House a single man of first class or even of second class debating power on the bench of the Ministry. An able writer has well remarked that the position of the Ministry in the House of Lords might be compared

to that of a water-logged wreck into which enemies from all quarters are pouring their broadsides.

The accession of the Queen made it necessary that a new Parliament should be summoned. The struggle between parties among the constituencies was very animated, and was carried on in some instances with a recourse to manœuvre and stratagem such as in our time would hardly be possible. The result was not a very marked alteration in the condition of parties; but on the whole the advantage remained with the Tories. Somewhere about this time, it may be remarked, the use of the word 'Conservative' to describe the latter political party first came into fashion. Mr. Wilson Croker is credited with the honour of having first employed the word in that sense. In an article in the 'Quarterly Review,' some years before, he spoke of being decidedly and conscientiously attached 'to what is called the Tory, but which might with more propriety be called the Conservative party.' During the elections for the new Parliament, Lord John Russell, speaking at a public dinner at Stroud, made allusion to the new name which his opponents were beginning to affect for their party. 'If that,' he said, 'is the name that pleases them; if they say that the old distinction of Whig and Tory should no longer be kept up, I am ready, in opposition to their name of Conservative, to take the name of Reformer, and to stand by that opposition.'

The Tories or Conservatives, then, had a slight gain as the result of the appeal to the country. The new Parliament on its assembling seems to have gathered in the Commons an unusually large number of gifted and promising men. There was something too of a literary stamp about it, a fact not much to be observed in Parliaments of a date nearer to the present time. Mr. Grote, the historian of Greece, sat for the City of London. The late Lord Lytton, then Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer, had a seat, an advanced Radical at that day. Mr. Disraeli came then into Parliament for the first time. Charles Buller, full of high spirits, brilliant humour, and the very inspiration of keen good sense, seemed on the sure way to that career of renown which a premature death cut short. Sir William Molesworth was an excellent type of the school which in later days was called the Philosophical Radical. Another distinguished member of the same school, Mr. Roebuck, had lost his seat, and was for the moment an outsider. Mr. Gladstone had been already five years in Parliament. The late Lord Carlisle, then Lord Morpeth, was looked upon as a graceful specimen of the literary and artistic young nobleman who also cultivates a little politics for his intellectual amusement. Lord John Russell had but lately begun his career as leader of the House of Commons. Lord

Palmerston was Foreign Secretary, but had not even then got the credit of the great ability which he possessed. Not many years before Mr. Greville spoke of him as a man who 'had been twenty years in office and had never distinguished himself before.' Mr. Greville expresses a mild surprise at the high opinion which persons who knew Lord Palmerston intimately were pleased to entertain as to his ability and his capacity for work. Only those who knew him very intimately indeed had any idea of the capacity for governing Parliament and the country which he was soon afterwards to display. Sir Robert Peel was leader of the Conservative party. Lord Stanley, the late Lord Derby, was still in the House of Commons. He had not long before broken definitively with the Whigs on the question of the Irish ecclesiastical establishment, and had passed over to that Conservative party of which he afterwards became the most influential leader and the most powerful parliamentary orator. O'Connell and Sheil represented the eloquence of the Irish national party. Decidedly the House of Commons first elected during Queen Victoria's reign was strong in eloquence and talent. Only two really great speakers have arisen in the forty years that followed who were not members of Parliament at that time, Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright. Mr. Cobden had come forward as a candidate for the borough of Stockport, but was not successful, and did not obtain a seat in Parliament until four years after. It was only by what may be called an accident that Macaulay and Mr. Roebuck were not in the Parliament of 1837. It is fair to say, therefore, that, except for Cobden and Bright, the subsequent forty years have added no first class name to the records of Parliamentary eloquence.

The Ministry was not very strong in the House of Commons. Its conditions indeed hardly allowed it to feel itself strong even if it had had more powerful representatives in either house. Its adherents were but loosely held together. The more ardent reformers were disappointed with ministers; the Free Trade movement was rising into distinct bulk and proportions, and threatened to be formidably independent of mere party ties. The Government had to rely a good deal on the precarious support of Mr. O'Connell and his followers. They were not rich in debating talent in the Commons any more than in the Lords. Sir Robert Peel, the leader of the opposition, was by far the most powerful man in the House of Commons. Added to his great qualities as an administrator and a Parliamentary debater, he had the virtue, then very rare among Conservative statesmen, of being a sound and clear financier, with a good grasp of the fundamental principles of political economy. His high, austere character made him respected by opponents as well as by friends. He had not perhaps many intimate friends. His temperament was cold, or at

least its heat was self-contained; he threw out no genial glow to those around him. He was by nature a reserved and shy man, in whose manners shyness took the form of pompousness and coldness. Something might be said of him like that which Richter said of Schiller: he was to strangers stony and like a precipice from which it was their instinct to spring back. It is certain that he had warm and generous feelings, but his very sensitiveness only led him to disguise them. The contrast between his emotions and his lack of demonstrativeness created in him a constant artificiality which often seemed mere awkwardness. It was in the House of Commons that his real genius and character displayed themselves. The atmosphere of debate was to him what Macaulay says wine was to Addison, the influence which broke the spell under which his fine intellect seemed otherwise to lie imprisoned. Peel was a perfect master of the House of Commons. He was as great an orator as any man could be who addresses himself to the House of Commons, its ways and its purposes alone. He went as near perhaps to the rank of a great orator as anyone can go who is but little gifted with imagination. Oratory has been well described as the fusion of reason and passion. Passion always carries something of the imaginative along with it. Sir Robert Peel had little imagination, and almost none of that passion which in eloquence sometimes supplies its place. His style was clear, strong, and stately; full of various argument and apt illustration drawn from books and from the world of politics and commerce. He followed a difficult argument home to its utter conclusions; and if it had in it any lurking fallacy, he brought out the weakness into the clearest light, often with a happy touch of humour and quiet sarcasm. His speeches might be described as the very perfection of good sense and high principle clothed in the most impressive language. But they were something more peculiar than this, for they were so constructed, in their argument and their style alike, as to touch the very core of the intelligence of the House of Commons. They told of the feelings and the inspiration of Parliament as the ballad-music of a country tells of its scenery and its national sentiments.

Lord Stanley was a far more energetic and impassioned speaker than Sir Robert Peel, and perhaps occasionally, in his later career, came now and then nearer to the height of genuine oratory. But Lord Stanley was little more than a splendid Parliamentary partisan, even when, long after, he was Prime Minister of England. He had very little indeed of that class of information which the modern world requires of its statesmen and leaders. Of political economy, of finance, of the development and the discoveries of modern science, he knew almost as little as it is possible for an able and energetic man to know who lives in the throng of active life

and hears what people are talking of around him. He once said good-humouredly of himself, that he was brought up in the pre-scientific period. His scholarship was merely such training in the classic languages as allowed him to have a full literary appreciation of the beauty of Greek and Roman literature. He had no real and deep knowledge of the history of the Greek and the Roman people, nor probably did he at all appreciate the great difference between the spirit of Roman and of Greek civilization. He had, in fact, what would have been called at an earlier day an elegant scholarship; he had a considerable knowledge of the politics of his time in most European countries, an energetic intrepid spirit, and with him, as Macaulay well said, the science of Parliamentary debate seemed to be an instinct. There was no speaker on the ministerial benches at that time who could for a moment be compared with him.

Lord John Russell, who had the leadership of the party in the House of Commons, was really a much stronger man than he seemed to be. He had a character for dauntless courage and confidence among his friends: for boundless self-conceit among his enemies. Everyone remembers Sydney Smith's famous illustrations of Lord John Russell's unlimited faith in his own power of achievement. Thomas Moore addressed a poem to him at one time, when Lord John Russell thought or talked of giving up political life, in which he appeals to 'thy genius, thy youth, and thy name,' declares that the instinct of the young statesman is the same as 'the eaglet's to soar with his eyes on the sun,' and implores him not to 'think for an instant thy country can spare such a light from her darkening horizon as thou.' Later observers, to whom Lord John Russell appeared probably remarkable for a cold and formal style as a debater, and for lack of originating power as a statesman, may find it difficult to reconcile the poet's picture with their own impressions of the reality. But it is certain that at one time the reputation of Lord John Russell was that of a rather reckless man of genius, a sort of Whig Shelley. He had in truth much less genius than his friends and admirers believed, and a great deal more of practical strength than either friends or foes gave him credit for. He became, not indeed an orator, but a very keen debater, who was especially effective in a cold irritating sarcasm which penetrated the weakness of an opponent's argument like some dissolving acid. In the poem from which we have quoted, Moore speaks of the eloquence of his noble friend as 'not like those rills from a height, which sparkle and foam and in vapour are o'er; but a current that works out its way into light through the filtering recesses of thought and of lore.' Allowing for the exaggeration of friendship and poetry, this is not a bad description of what Lord John Russell's style became at its best. The thin bright stream of argument

worked its way slowly out and contrived to wear a path for itself through obstacles which at first the looker-on might have felt assured it never could penetrate. Lord John Russell's swordsmanship was the swordsmanship of Saladin, and not that of stout King Richard. But it was very effective sword-play in its own way.

Our English system of government by party makes the history of Parliament seem like that of a succession of great political duels. Two men stand constantly confronted during a series of years, one of whom is at the head of the Government, while the other is at the head of the Opposition. They change places with each victory. The conqueror goes into office; the conquered into opposition. This is not the place to discuss either the merits or the probable duration of the principle of government by party; it is enough to say here that it undoubtedly gives a very animated and varied complexion to our political troubles, and invests them indeed with much of the glow and passion of actual warfare. It has often happened that the two leading opponents are men of intellectual and oratorical powers so fairly balanced that their followers may well dispute among themselves as to the superiority of their respective chiefs, and that the public in general may become divided into two schools not merely political, but even critical, according to their partiality for one or the other. We still dispute as to whether Fox or Pitt was the greater leader, the greater orator; it is probable that for a long time to come the same question will be asked by political students about Gladstone and Disraeli. For many years Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel stood thus opposed. They will often come into contrast and comparison in these pages. For the present it is enough to say that Peel had by far the more original mind, and that Lord John Russell never obtained so great an influence over the House of Commons as that which his rival long enjoyed. The heat of political passion afterwards induced a bitter critic to accuse Peel of lack of originality, because he assimilated readily and turned to account the ideas of other men. Not merely the criticism, but the principle on which it was founded, was altogether wrong. It ought to be left to children to suppose that nothing is original but that which we make up, as the childish phrase is, 'out of our own heads.' Originality in politics, as in every field of art, consists in the use and application of the ideas which we get or are given to us. The greatest proof Sir Robert Peel ever gave of high and genuine statesmanship was in his recognition that the time had come to put into practical legislation the principles which Cobden and Villiers and Bright had been advocating in the House of Commons. Lord John Russell was a born reformer. He had sat at the feet of Fox. He was cradled in the principles of Liberalism. He held faithfully to his

creed; he was one of its boldest and keenest champions. He had great advantages over Peel, in the mere fact that he had begun his education in a more enlightened school. But he wanted passion quite as much as Peel did, and remained still farther than Peel below the level of the genuine orator. Russell, as we have said, had not long held the post of leader of the House of Commons when the first Parliament of Queen Victoria assembled. He was still, in a manner, on trial; and even among his friends, perhaps especially among his friends, there were whispers that his confidence in himself was greater than his capacity for leadership.

After the chiefs of Ministry and of Opposition, the most conspicuous figure in the House of Commons was the colossal form of O'Connell, the great Irish agitator, of whom we shall hear a good deal more. Among the foremost orators of the House at that time was O'Connell's impassioned lieutenant, Richard Lalor Sheil. It is curious how little is now remembered of Sheil, whom so many well-qualified authorities declared to be a genuine orator. Lord Beaconsfield, in one of his novels, speaks of Sheil's eloquence in terms of the highest praise, and disparages Canning. It is but a short time since Mr. Gladstone selected Sheil as one of three remarkable illustrations of great success as a speaker achieved in spite of serious defects of voice and delivery; the other two examples being Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Newman. Mr. Gladstone described Sheil's voice as like nothing but the sound produced by 'a tin kettle battered about from place to place,' knocking first against one side and then against another. 'In anybody else,' Mr. Gladstone went on to say, 'I would not, if it had been in my choice, like to have listened to that voice; but in him I would not have changed it, for it was part of a most remarkable whole, and nobody ever felt it painful while listening to it. He was a great orator, and an orator of much preparation, I believe, carried even to words, with a very vivid imagination and an enormous power of language and of strong feeling. There was a peculiar character, a sort of half wildness in his aspect and delivery; his whole figure, and his delivery and his voice and his matter were all in such perfect keeping with one another that they formed a great Parliamentary picture; and although it is now thirty-five years since I heard Mr. Sheil, my recollection of him is just as vivid as if I had been listening to him to-day.' This surely is a picture of a great orator, as Mr. Gladstone says Sheil was. Nor is it easy to understand how a man without being a great orator could have persuaded two experts of such very different schools as Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli, that he deserved such a name. Yet the after years have in a curious but unmistakable way denied the claims of Sheil. Perhaps it is because, if he really was an orator, he was that and nothing more, that our practical age, finding no

mark left by him on Parliament or politics, has declined to take much account even of his eloquence. His career faded away into second-class ministerial office, and closed at last, somewhat prematurely, in the little court of Florence, where he was sent as the representative of England. He is worth mentioning here because he had the promise of a splendid reputation; because the charm of his eloquence evidently lingered long in the memories of those to whom it was once familiar, and because his is one of the most brilliant illustrations of that career of Irish agitator, which begins in stormy opposition to English government and subsides after a while into meek recognition of its title and adoption of its ministerial uniform. O'Connell we have passed over for the present, because we shall hear of him again; but of Sheil it is not necessary that we should hear any more.

This was evidently a remarkable Parliament, with Russell for the leader of one party, and Peel for the leader of another; with O'Connell and Sheil as independent supporters of the Ministry; with Mr. Gladstone still comparatively new to public life, and Mr. Disraeli to address the Commons for the first time; with Palmerston still unrecognised and Stanley lately gone over to Conservatism, itself the newest invented thing in politics; with Grote and Bulwer, and Joseph Hume and Charles Buller; and Ward and Villiers, Sir Francis Burdett and Smith O'Brien, and the Radical Alcibiades of Finsbury, 'Tom' Duncombe.

## CHAPTER III.

### CANADA AND LORD DURHAM.

THE first disturbance to the quiet and good promise of the new reign came from Canada. The Parliament which we have described met for the first time on November 20, 1837, and was to have been adjourned to February 1, 1838; but the news which began to arrive from Canada was so alarming, that the Ministry were compelled to change their purpose and fix the re-assembling of the Houses for January 16. The disturbances in Canada had already broken out into open rebellion.

The condition of Canada was very peculiar. Lower or Eastern Canada was inhabited for the most part by men of French descent, who still kept up in the midst of an active and moving civilisation most of the principles and usages which belonged to France before the Revolution. Even to this day, after all the changes, political and social, that have taken place, the

traveller from Europe sees in many of the towns of Lower Canada an old-fashioned France, such as he had known otherwise only in books that tell of France before '89. Nor is this only in small sequestered towns and villages which the impulses of modern ways have yet failed to reach. In busy and trading Montreal, with its residents made up of Englishmen, Scotchmen and Americans, as well as the men of French descent, the visitor is more immediately conscious of the presence of what may be called an old-fashioned Catholicism than he is in Paris, or even indeed in Rome. In Quebec, a city which for picturesqueness and beauty of situation is not equalled by Edinburgh or Florence, the curious interest of the place is further increased, the novelty of the sensations it produces in the visitor is made more piquant, by the evidences he meets with everywhere, through its quaint and steepy streets, and under its antiquated archways, of the existence of a society which has hardly in France survived the Great Revolution. At the opening of Queen Victoria's reign, the undiluted character of this French mediævalism was of course much more remarkable. It would doubtless have exhibited itself quietly enough if it were absolutely undiluted. Lower Canada would have dozed away in its sleepy picturesqueness, held fast to its ancient ways, and allowed a bustling giddy world, all alive with commerce and ambition, and desire for novelty and the terribly disturbing thing which unresting people call progress, to rush on its wild path unheeded. But its neighbours and its newer citizens were not disposed to allow Lower Canada thus to rot itself in ease on the decaying wharfs of the St. Lawrence and the St. Charles. In the large towns there were active traders from England and other countries, who were by no means content to put up with old-world ways and to let the magnificent resources of the place run to waste. Upper Canada, on the other hand, was all new as to its population, and was full of the modern desire for commercial activity. Upper Canada was peopled almost exclusively by inhabitants from Great Britain. Scotch settlers, with all the energy and push of their country; men from the northern province of Ireland, who might be described as virtually Scotch also, came there. The emigrant from the south of Ireland went to the United States because he found there a country more or less hostile to England, and because there the Catholic Church was understood to be flourishing. The Ulsterman went to Canada as the Scotchman did, because he saw the flag of England flying and the principle of religious establishment which he admired at home still recognised. It is almost needless to say that Englishmen in great numbers were settled there, whose chief desire was to make the colony as far as possible a copy of the institutions of England. When Canada was ceded to England by France, as a consequence of the victories of Wolfe, the population was

nearly all in the lower province, and therefore was nearly all of French origin. Since the cession the growth of the population of the other province had been surprisingly rapid, and had been almost exclusively the growth, as we have seen, of immigration from Great Britain, one or two of the colonising states of the European continent, and the American Republic itself.

It is easy to see on the very face of things some of the difficulties which must arise in the development of such a system. The French of Lower Canada would regard with almost morbid jealousy any legislation which appeared likely to interfere with their ancient ways and to give any advantage or favour to the populations of British descent. The latter would see injustice or feebleness in every measure which did not assist them in developing their more energetic ideas. The home Government in such a condition of things often has especial trouble with those whom we may call its own people. Their very loyalty to the institutions of the old country impels them to be unreasonable and exacting. It is not easy to make them understand why they should not be at the least encouraged, if not indeed actually enabled, to carry boldly out the Anglicising policy which they clearly see is to be for the good of the colony in the end. The Government has all the difficulty that the mother of a household has when, with the best intentions and the most conscientious resolve to act impartially, she is called upon to manage her own children and the children of her husband's former marriage. Every word she says, every resolve she is induced to acknowledge, is liable to be regarded with jealousy and dissatisfaction on the one side as well as on the other. 'You are doing everything to favour your own children,' the one set cry out. 'You ought to do something more for your own children,' is the equally querulous remonstrance of the other.

It would have been difficult, therefore, for the home Government, however wise and far-seeing their policy, to make the wheels of any system run smoothly at once in such a colony as Canada. But their policy certainly does not seem to have been either wise or far-seeing. The plan of government adopted looks as if it were especially devised to bring out into sharp relief all the antagonisms that were natural to the existing state of things. By an Act called the Constitution of 1791, Canada was divided into two provinces, the Upper and the Lower. Each province had a separate system of government, consisting of a governor, an executive council appointed by the Crown, and supposed in some way to resemble the Privy Council of this country; a legislative council, the members of which were appointed by the Crown for life; and a representative assembly, the members of which were elected for four years. At the same time the

clergy reserves were established by Parliament. One-seventh of the waste lands of the colony was set aside for the maintenance of the Protestant clergy, a fruitful source of disturbance and ill-feeling.

When the two provinces were divided in 1791, the intention was that they should remain distinct in fact as well as in name. It was hoped that Lower Canada would remain altogether French, and that Upper Canada would be exclusively English. Then it was thought that they might be governed on their separate systems as securely and with as little trouble as we now govern the Mauritius on one system and Malta on another. Those who formed such an idea do not seem to have taken any counsel with geography. The one fact, that Upper Canada can hardly be said to have any means of communication with Europe and the whole Eastern world except through Lower Canada, or else through the United States, ought to have settled the question at once. It was in Lower Canada that the greatest difficulties arose. A constant antagonism grew up between the majority of the legislative council, who were nominees of the Crown, and the majority of the representative assembly, who were elected by the population of the province. The home Government encouraged and indeed kept up that most odious and dangerous of all instruments for the supposed management of a colony—a 'British party' devoted to the so-called interests of the mother country, and obedient to the word of command from their masters and patrons at home. The majority in the legislative council constantly thwarted the resolutions of the vast majority of the popular assembly. Disputes arose as to the voting of supplies. The Government retained in their sevice officials whom the representative assembly had condemned, and insisted on the right to pay them their salaries out of certain funds of the colony. The representative assembly took to stopping the supplies, and the Government claimed the right to counteract this measure by appropriating to the purpose such public moneys as happened to be within their reach at the time. The colony—for indeed on these subjects the population of Lower Canada, right or wrong, was so near to being of one mind that we may take the declarations of public meetings as representing the colony—demanded that the legislative council should be made elective, and that the colonial Government should not be allowed to dispose of the moneys of the colony at their pleasure. The House of Commons and the Government here replied by refusing to listen to the proposal to make the legislative council an elective body, and authorising the provincial Government, without the consent of the colonial representation, to appropriate the money in the treasury for the administration of justice and the maintenance of the executive system. This was in plain words to announce to the French population, who made up the vast majority, and whom we

had taught to believe in the representative form of government, that their wishes would never count for anything, and that the colony was to be ruled solely at the pleasure of the little British party of officials and crown nominees. It is not necessary to suppose that in all these disputes the popular majority were in the right and the officials in the wrong. No one can doubt that there was much bitterness of feeling arising out of the mere differences of race. The French and the English could not be got to blend. In some places, as it was afterwards said in the famous report of Lord Durham, the two sets of colonists never publicly met together except in the jury-box, and then only for the obstruction of justice. The British residents complained bitterly of being subject to French law and procedure in so many of their affairs. The tenure of land and many other conditions of the system were antique French, and the French law worked, or rather did not work, in civil affairs side by side with the equally impeded British law in criminal matters. At last the representative assembly refused to vote any further supplies or to carry on any further business. They formulated their grievances against the home Government. Their complaints were of arbitrary conduct on the part of the governors; intolerable composition of the legislative council, which they insisted ought to be elective; illegal appropriation of the public money; and violent prorogation of the provincial parliament.

One of the leading men in the movement which afterwards became rebellion in Lower Canada was Mr. Louis Joseph Papineau. This man had risen to high position by his talents, his energy, and his undoubtedly honourable character. He had represented Montreal in the Representative Assembly of Lower Canada, and he afterwards became Speaker of the House. He made himself leader of the movement to protest against the policy of the governors, and that of the Government at home by whom they were sustained. He held a series of meetings, at some of which undoubtedly rather strong language was used, and too frequent and significant appeals were made to the example held out to the population of Lower Canada by the successful revolt of the United States. Mr. Papineau also planned the calling together of a great convention to discuss and proclaim the grievances of the colonies. Lord Gosford, the governor, began by dismissing several militia officers who had taken part in some of these demonstrations; Mr. Papineau himself was an officer of this force. Then the governor issued warrants for the apprehension of many members of the popular Assembly on the charge of high treason. Some of these at once left the country; others against whom warrants were issued were arrested, and a sudden resistance was made by their friends and supporters. Then, in the manner familiar to all who have read anything of the history of

revolutionary movements, the resistance to a capture of prisoners suddenly transformed itself into open rebellion.

The rebellion was not in a military sense a very great thing. At its first outbreak the military authorities were for a moment surprised, and the rebels obtained one or two trifling advantages. But the commander-in-chief at once showed energy adequate to the occasion, and used, as it was his duty to do, a strong hand in putting the movement down. The rebels fought with something like desperation in one or two instances, and there was, it must be said, a good deal of blood shed. The disturbance, however, after a while extended to the upper province. Upper Canada too had its complaints against its governors and the home Government, and its protests against having its offices all disposed of by a 'family compact;' but the rebellious movement does not seem to have taken a genuine hold of the province at any time. There was some discontent; there was a constant stimulus to excitement kept up from across the American frontier by sympathisers with any republican movement; and there were some excitable persons inclined for revolutionary change in the province itself whose zeal caught fire when the flame broke out in Lower Canada. But it seems to have been an exotic movement altogether, and so far as its military history is concerned, deserves notice chiefly for the chivalrous eccentricity of the plan by which the governor of the province undertook to put it down. The governor was the gallant and fanciful soldier and traveller, Sir Francis, then Major, Head. He, who had fought at Waterloo and seen much service besides, was quietly performing the duties of Assistant Poor Law Commissioner for the county of Kent, when he was summoned, in 1835, at a moment's notice, to assume the governorship of Upper Canada. When the rebellion broke out in that province, Major Head proved himself not merely equal to the occasion, but boldly superior to it. He promptly resolved to win a grand moral victory over all rebellion then and for the future. He was seized with a desire to show to the whole world how vain it was for any disturber to think of shaking the loyalty of the province under his control. He issued to rebellion in general a challenge not unlike that which Shakespeare's Prince Harry offers to the chiefs of the insurrection against Henry IV. He invited it to come on and settle the controversy by a sort of duel. He sent all the regular soldiers out of the province to the help of the authorities of Lower Canada; he allowed the rebels to mature their plans in any way they liked; he permitted them to choose their own day and hour; and when they were ready to begin their assaults on constituted authority, he summoned to his side the militia and all the loyal inhabitants, and with their help he completely extinguished the rebellion. It was but a very trifling affair; it went out or collapsed in a

moment. Major Head had his desire. He showed that rebellion in that province was not a thing serious enough to call for the intervention of regular troops. The loyal colonists were for the most part delighted with the spirited conduct of their leader and his new-fashioned way of dealing with rebellion. No doubt the moral effect was highly imposing. The plan was almost as original as that described in Herodotus and introduced into one of Massinger's plays, when the moral authority of the masters is made to assert itself over the rebellious slaves by the mere exhibition of the symbolic whip. But the authorities at home took a somewhat more prosaic view of the policy of Sir Francis Head. It was suggested that if the fears of many had been realised and the rebellion had been aided by a large force of sympathisers from the United States, the moral authority of Canadian loyalty might have stood greatly in need of the material presence of regular troops. In the end Sir Francis Head resigned his office. His loyalty, courage and success were acknowledged by the gift of a baronetcy; and he obtained the admiration not merely of those who approved his policy, but even of many among those who felt bound to condemn it. Perhaps it may be mentioned that there were some who persisted to the last in the belief that Sir Francis Head was not by any means so rashly chivalrous as he had allowed himself to be thought, and that he had full preparation made, if his moral demonstration should fail, to supply its place in good time with more commonplace and effective measures.

The news of the outbreaks in Canada created a natural excitement in this country. There was a very strong feeling of sympathy among many classes here—not, indeed, with the rebellion, but with the colony which complained of what seemed to be genuine and serious grievances. Public meetings were held at which resolutions were passed ascribing the disturbances in the first place to the refusal by the Government of any redress sought for by the colonists. Mr. Hume, the pioneer of financial reform, took the side of the colonists very warmly, both in and out of Parliament. During one of the Parliamentary debates on the subject, Sir Robert Peel referred to the principal leader of the rebellion in Upper Canada as 'a Mr. Mackenzie.' Mr. Hume resented this way of speaking of a prominent colonist, and remarked that 'there was a Mr. Mackenzie as there might be a Sir Robert Peel,' and created some amusement by referring to the declarations of Lord Chatham on the American Stamp Act, which he cited as the opinions of 'a Mr. Pitt.' Lord John Russell on the part of the Government introduced a bill to deal with the rebellious province. The bill proposed in brief to suspend for a time the constitution of Lower Canada, and to send out from this country a governor-general and high commissioner, with full powers to deal with the rebellion, and to remodel

the constitution of both provinces. The proposal met with a good deal of opposition at first on very different grounds. Mr. Roebuck, who was then, as it happened, out of Parliament, appeared as the agent and representative of the province of Lower Canada, and demanded to be heard at the bar of both the houses in opposition to the bill. After some little demur his demand was granted, and he stood at the bar, first of the Commons, and then of the Lords, and opposed the bill on the ground that it unjustly suspended the constitution of Lower Canada in consequence of disturbances provoked by the intolerable oppression of the home Government. A critic of that day remarked that most orators seemed to make it their business to conciliate and propitiate the audience they desired to win over, but that Mr. Roebuck seemed from the very first to be determined to set all his hearers against him and his cause. Mr. Roebuck's speeches were, however, exceedingly argumentative and powerful appeals. Their effect was enhanced by the singularly youthful appearance of the speaker, who is described as looking like a boy hardly out of his teens.

It was evident, however, that the proposal of the Government must in the main be adopted. The general opinion of Parliament decided not unreasonably that that was not the moment for entering into a consideration of the past policy of the Government, and that the country could do nothing better just then than send out some man of commanding ability and character to deal with the existing condition of things. There was an almost universal admission that the Government had found the right man when Lord John Russell mentioned the name of Lord Durham.

Lord Durham was a man of remarkable character. It is a matter of surprise how little his name is thought of by the present generation, seeing what a strenuous figure he seemed in the eyes of his contemporaries, and how striking a part he played in the politics of a time which has even still some living representatives. He belonged to one of the oldest families in England. The Lambtons had lived on their estate in the north, in uninterrupted succession, since the Conquest. The male succession, it is stated, never was interrupted since the twelfth century. They were not, however, a family of aristocrats. Their wealth was derived chiefly from coal mines, and grew up in later days; the property at first, and for a long time, was of inconsiderable value. For more than a century, however, the Lambtons had come to take rank among the gentry of the county, and some member of the family had represented the city of Durham in the House of Commons from 1727 until the early death of Lord Durham's father in December 1797. William Henry Lambton, Lord Durham's father, was a staunch Whig, and had been a friend and associate of Fox. John George Lambton, the son, was born at Lambton Castle in April 1792. Before he

was quite twenty years of age, he made a romantic marriage at Gretna Green with a lady who died three years after. He served for a short time in a regiment of Hussars. About a year after the death of his first wife, he married the eldest daughter of Lord Grey. He was then only twenty-four years of age. He had before this been returned to Parliament for the county of Durham, and he soon distinguished himself as a very advanced and energetic reformer. While in the Commons he seldom addressed the House, but when he did speak, it was in support of some measure of reform, or against what he conceived to be antiquated and illiberal legislation. He brought out a plan of his own for Parliamentary reform in 1821. In 1828 he was raised to the peerage with the title of Baron Durham. When the Ministry of Lord Grey was formed, in November 1830, Lord Durham became Lord Privy Seal. He is said to have had an almost complete control over Lord Grey. He had an impassioned and energetic nature, which sometimes drove him into outbreaks of feeling which most of his colleagues dreaded. Various highly coloured descriptions of stormy scenes between him and his companions in office are given by writers of the time. Lord Durham, his enemies, and some of his friends said, bullied and browbeat his opponents in the Cabinet, and would sometimes hardly allow his father-in-law and official chief a chance of putting in a word on the other side, or in mitigation of his tempestuous mood. He was thorough in his reforming purposes, and would have rushed at radical changes with scanty consideration for the time or for the temper of his opponents. He had very little reverence indeed for what Carlyle calls the majesty of custom. Whatever he wished he strongly wished. He had no idea of reticence, and cared not much for the decorum of office. It is not necessary to believe all the stories told by those who hated and dreaded Lord Durham, in order to accept the belief that he really was somewhat of an *enfant terrible* to the stately Lord Grey, and to the easy-going colleagues who were by no means absolutely eaten up by their zeal for reform. In the powerful speech which he delivered in the House of Lords on the Reform Bill, there is a specimen of his eloquence of denunciation which might well have startled listeners even in those days when the licence of speech was often sadly out of proportion with its legalised liberty. Lord Durham was especially roused to anger by some observations made in the debate of a previous night by the Bishop of Exeter. He described the prelate's speech as an exhibition of 'coarse and virulent invective, malignant and false insinuation, the grossest perversions of historical facts decked out with all the choicest flowers of pamphleteering slang.' He was called to order for these words, and a peer moved that they be taken down. Lord Durham was by no means dismayed. He

coolly declared that he did not mean to defend his language as the most elegant or graceful, but that it exactly conveyed the ideas regarding the bishop which he meant to express; that he believed the bishop's speech to contain insinuations which were as false as scandalous; that he had said so; that he now begged leave to repeat the words, and that he paused to give any noble lord who thought fit, an opportunity of taking them down. No one, however, seemed disposed to encounter any farther this impassioned adversary, and when he had had his say, Lord Durham became somewhat mollified, and endeavoured to soften the pain of the impression he had made. He begged the House of Lords to make some allowance for him if he had spoken too warmly; for, as he said with much pathetic force, his mind had lately been tortured by domestic loss. He thus alluded to the recent death of his eldest son—'a beautiful boy,' says a writer of some years ago, 'whose features will live for ever in the well-known picture by Lawrence.'

The whole of this incident, the fierce attack and the sudden pathetic expression of regret, will serve well enough to illustrate the emotional, uncontrolled character of Lord Durham. He was one of the men who, even when they are thoroughly in the right, have often the unhappy art of seeming to put themselves completely in the wrong. He was the most advanced of all the reformers in the reforming Ministry of Lord Grey. His plan of Reform in 1821 proposed to give four hundred members to certain districts of town and country, in which every householder should have a vote. When Lord Grey had formed his reform Ministry, Lord Durham sent for Lord John Russell and requested him to draw up a scheme of reform. A committee was formed on Lord Durham's suggestion, consisting of Sir James Graham, Lord Duncannon, Lord John Russell, and Lord Durham himself. Lord John Russell drew up a plan, which he published long after with the alterations which Lord Durham had suggested and written in his own hand on the margin. If Lord Durham had had his way, the Ballot would at that time have been included in the programme of the Government; and it was indeed understood that at one period of the discussions he had won over his colleagues to his opinion on that subject. He was in a word the Radical member of the Cabinet, with all the energy which became such a character; with that 'magnificent indiscretion' which had been attributed to a greater man, Edmund Burke; with all that courage of his opinions which, in the Frenchified phraseology of modern politics, is so much talked of, so rarely found, and so little trusted or successful when it is found.

Not long after Lord Durham was raised in the peerage and became an earl. His influence over Lord Grey continued great, but his differences

of opinion with his former colleagues—he had resigned his office—became greater and greater every day. More than once he had taken the public into his confidence in his characteristic and heedless way. He was sent on a mission to Russia, perhaps to get him out of the way, and afterwards he was made ambassador at the Russian court. In the interval between his mission and his formal appointment he had come back to England and performed a series of enterprises which in the homely and undignified language of American politics would probably be called 'stumping the country.' He was looked to with much hope by the more extreme Liberals in the country, and with corresponding dislike and dread by all who thought the country had gone far enough, or much too far, in the recent political changes.

None of his opponents, however, denied his great ability. He was never deterred by conventional beliefs and habits from looking boldly into the very heart of a great political difficulty. He was never afraid to propose what in times later than his have been called heroic remedies. There was a general impression, perhaps even among those who liked him least, that he was a sort of 'unemployed Cæsar,' a man who only required a field large enough to develop great qualities in the ruling of men. The difficulties in Canada seemed to have come as if expressly to give him an opportunity of proving himself all that his friends declared him to be, or of justifying for ever the distrust of his enemies. He went out to Canada with the assurance of everyone that his expedition would either make or mar a career, if not a country.

Lord Durham went out to Canada with the brightest hopes and prospects. He took with him two of the men best qualified in England at that time to make his mission a success—Mr. Charles Buller and Mr. Edward Gibbon Wakefield. He understood that he was going out as a dictator, and there can be no doubt that his expedition was regarded in this light by England and by the colonies. We have remarked that people looked on his mission as likely to make or mar a career, if not a country. What it did, however, was somewhat different from that which anyone expected. Lord Durham found out a new alternative. He made a country and he marred a career. He is distinctly the founder of the system which has since worked with such gratifying success in Canada; he is the founder even of the principle which allowed the quiet development of the provinces into a confederation with neighbouring colonies under the name of the Dominion of Canada. But the singular quality which in home politics had helped to mar so much of Lord Durham's personal career was in full work during his visit to Canada. It would not be easy to find in modern political history so curious an example of splendid and lasting success

combined with all the appearance of utter and disastrous failure. The mission of Lord Durham saved Canada. It ruined Lord Durham. At the moment it seemed to superficial observers to have been as injurious to the colony as to the man.

Lord Durham arrived in Quebec at the end of May, 1838. He at once issued a proclamation, in style like that of a dictator. It was not in any way unworthy of the occasion, which especially called for the intervention of a brave and enlightened dictatorship. He declared that he would unsparingly punish any who violated the laws, but he frankly invited the co-operation of the colonies to form a new system of government really suited to their wants and to the altering conditions of civilisation. Unfortunately, he had hardly entered on his work of dictatorship when he found that he was no longer a dictator. In the passing of the Canada Bill through Parliament the powers which he understood were to be conferred upon him had been considerably reduced. Lord Durham went to work, however, as if he were still invested with absolute authority over all the laws and conditions of the colony. A very Cæsar laying down the lines for the future government of a province could hardly have been more boldly arbitrary. Let it be said also that Lord Durham's arbitrariness was for the most part healthy in effect and just in spirit. But it gave an immense opportunity of attack on himself and on the Government to the enemies of both at home. Lord Durham had hardly begun his work of reconstruction when his recall was clamoured for by vehement voices in Parliament.

Lord Durham began by issuing a series of ordinances intended to provide for the security of Lower Canada. He proclaimed a very liberal amnesty, to which, however, there were certain exceptions. The leaders of the rebellious movement, Papineau and others, who had escaped from the colony, were excluded from the amnesty. So likewise were certain prisoners who either had voluntarily confessed themselves guilty of high treason, or had been induced to make such an acknowledgment in the hope of obtaining a mitigated punishment. These Lord Durham ordered to be transported to Bermuda; and for any of these, or of the leaders who had escaped, who should return to the colony without permission, he proclaimed that they should be deemed guilty of high treason and condemned to suffer death. It needs no learned legal argument to prove that this was a proceeding not to be justified by any of the ordinary forms of law. Lord Durham had no power to transport anyone to Bermuda. He had no authority over Bermuda; he had no authority which he could delegate to the officials of Bermuda enabling them to detain political prisoners. Nor had he any power to declare that persons who returned to the colony were

to be liable to the punishment of death. It is not a capital offence by any of the laws of England for even a transported convict to break bounds and return to his home. All this was quite illegal; that is to say, was outside the limits of Lord Durham's legal authority. Lord Durham was well aware of the fact. He had not for a moment supposed that he was acting in accordance with ordinary English law. He was acting in the spirit of a dictator, at once bold and merciful, who is under the impression that he has been invested with extraordinary powers for the very reason that the crisis does not admit of the ordinary operations of law. For the decree of death to banished men returning without permission, he had indeed the precedent and authority of acts passed already by the colonial Parliament itself; but Lord Durham did not care for any such authority. He found that he had on his hands a considerable number of prisoners whom it would be absurd to put on trial in Lower Canada with the usual forms of law. It would have been absolutely impossible to get any unpacked jury to convict them. They would have been triumphantly acquitted. The authority of the Crown would have been brought into greater contempt than ever. So little faith had the colonists in the impartial working of the ordinary law in the governor's hands, that the universal impression in Lower Canada was that Lord Durham would have the prisoners tried by a packed jury of his own officials, convicted as a matter of course, and executed out of hand. It was with amazement people found that the new governor would not stoop to the infamy of packing a jury. Lord Durham saw no better way out of the difficulty than to impose a sort of exile on those who admitted their connection with the rebellion, and to prevent by the threat of a severe penalty the return of those who had already fled from the colony. His amnesty measure was large and liberal; but he did not see that he could allow prominent offenders to remain unrebuked in the colony; and to attempt to bring them to trial would have been to secure for them, not punishment, but public honour.

Another measure of Lord Durham's was likewise open to the charge of excessive use of power. The act which appointed him prescribed that he should be advised by a council, and that every ordinance of his should be signed by at least five of its members. There was already a council in existence nominated by Lord Durham's predecessor, Sir J. Colborne; a sort of provisional government put together to supply for the moment the place of the suspended political constitution. This council Lord Durham set aside altogether, and substituted for it one of his own making, and composed chiefly of his secretaries and the members of his staff. In truth this was but a part of the policy which he had marked out for himself. He was resolved to play the game which he honestly believed he could

play better than anyone else. He had in his mind, partly from the inspiration of the gifted and well-instructed men who accompanied and advises him, a plan which he was firmly convinced would be the salvation of the colony. Events have proved that he was right. His disposal of the prisoners was only a clearing of the decks for the great action of remodelling the colony. He did not allow a form of law to stand between him and his purpose. Indeed, as we have already said, he regarded himself as a dictator sent out to reconstruct a whole system in the best way he could. When he was accused of having gone beyond the law, he asked with a scorn not wholly unreasonable: 'What are the constitutional principles remaining in force where the whole constitution is suspended? What principle of the British Constitution holds good in a country where the people's money is taken from them without the people's consent; where representative government is annihilated; where martial law has been the law of the land, and where trial by jury exists only to defeat the ends of justice, and to provoke the righteous scorn and indignation of the community?'

Still there can be no doubt that a less impetuous and impatient spirit than that of Lord Durham might have found a way of beginning his great reforms without provoking such a storm of hostile criticism. He was, it must always be remembered, a dictator who only strove to use his powers for the restoration of liberty and constitutional government. His mode of disposing of his prisoners was arbitrary only in the interests of mercy. He declared openly that he did not think it right to send to an ordinary penal settlement, and thus brand with infamy, men whom the public feeling of the colony entirely approved, and whose cause, until they broke into rebellion, had far more right on its side than that of the authority they complained of could claim to possess. He sent them to Bermuda simply as into exile; to remove them from the colony, but nothing more. He lent the weight of this authority to the colonial Act, which prescribed the penalty of death for returning to the colony, because he believed that the men thus proscribed never would return.

But his policy met with the severest and most unmeasured criticism at home. If Lord Durham had been guilty of the worst excesses of power which Burke charged against Warren Hastings, he could not have been more fiercely denounced in the House of Lords. He was accused of having promulgated an ordinance which would enable him to hang men without any trial or form of trial. None of his opponents seemed to remember, that whether his disposal of the prisoners was right or wrong, it was only a small and incidental part of a great policy covering the readjustment of the whole political and social system of a splendid colony. The criticism

went on as if the promulgation of the Quebec ordinances was the be-all and the end-all of Lord Durham's mission. His opponents made great complaint about the cost of his progress in Canada. Lord Durham had undoubtedly a lavish taste and a love for something like Oriental display. He made his goings about in Canada like a gorgeous royal progress; yet it was well known that he took no remuneration whatever for himself, and did not even accept his own personal travelling expenses. He afterwards stated in the House of Lords that the visit cost him personally ten thousand pounds at least. Mr. Hume, the advocate of economy, made sarcastic comment on the sudden fit of parsimony which seemed to have seized, in Lord Durham's case, men whom he had never before known to raise their voices against any prodigality of expenditure.

The Ministry was very weak in debating power in the House of Lords. Lord Durham had made enemies there. The opportunity was tempting for assailing him and the Ministry together. Many of the criticisms were undoubtedly the conscientious protests of men who saw danger in any departure from the recognised principles of constitutional law. Eminent judges and lawyers in the House of Lords naturally looked above all things to the proper administration of the law as it existed. But it is hard to doubt that political or personal enmity influenced some of the attacks on Lord Durham's conduct. Almost all the leading men in the House of Lords were against him. Lord Brougham and Lord Lyndhurst were for the time leagued in opposition to the Government and in attack on the Canadian policy. Lord Brougham claimed to be consistent. He had opposed the Canada coercion from the beginning, he said, and he opposed illegal attempts to deal with Canada now. It seems a little hard to understand how Lord Brougham could really so far have misunderstood the purpose of Lord Durham's proclamation as to believe that he proposed to hang men without the form of law. However Lord Durham may have broken the technical rules of law, nothing could be more obvious than the fact that he did so in the interest of mercy and generosity, and not that of tyrannical severity. Lord Brougham inveighed against him with thundering eloquence, as if he were denouncing another Sejanus. It must be owned that his attacks lost some of their moral effect because of his known hatred to Lord Melbourne and the Ministry, and even to Lord Durham himself. People said that Brougham had a special reason for feeling hostile to anything done by Lord Durham. A dinner was given to Lord Grey by the Reformers of Edinburgh, in 1834, at which Lord Brougham and Lord Durham were both present. Brougham was called upon to speak, and in the course of his speech he took occasion to condemn certain too zealous Reformers who could not be content with the changes

that had been made, but must demand that the Ministry should rush forward into wild and extravagant enterprises. He enlarged upon this subject with great vivacity and with amusing variety of humorous and rhetorical illustration. Lord Durham assumed that the attack was intended for him. His assumption was not unnatural. When he came in his turn to speak, he was indiscreet enough to reply directly to Lord Brougham, to accept the speech of the former as a personal challenge, and in bitter words to retort invective and sarcasm. The scene was not edifying. The guests were scandalised. The effect of Brougham's speech was wholly spoiled. Brougham was made to seem a disturber of order by the indiscretion which provoked into retort a man notoriously indiscreet and incapable of self-restraint. It is not unfair to the memory of so fierce and unsparing a political gladiator as Lord Brougham, to assume that when he felt called upon to attack the Canadian policy of Lord Durham, the recollection of the scene at the Edinburgh dinner inspired with additional force his criticism of the Quebec ordinances.

The Ministry were weak and yielded. They had in the first instance approved of the ordinances, but they quickly gave way and abandoned them. They avoided a direct attempt on the part of Lord Brougham to reverse the policy of Lord Durham by announcing that they had determined to disallow the Quebec ordinances. Lord Durham learned for the first time from an American paper that the Government had abandoned him. He at once announced his determination to give up his position and to return to England. His letter announcing this resolve crossed on the ocean the despatch from home disallowing his ordinances. With characteristic imprudence he issued a proclamation from the Castle of St. Lewis, in the city of Quebec, which was virtually an appeal to the public feeling of the colony against the conduct of her Majesty's Government. When the news of this extraordinary proclamation reached home, Lord Durham was called by the *Times* newspaper, 'the Lord High Seditioner.' The representative of the Sovereign, it was said, had appealed to the judgment of a still rebellious colony against the policy of the Sovereign's own advisers. Of course Lord Durham's recall was unavoidable. The Government at once sent out a despatch removing him from his place as Governor of British North America.

Lord Durham had not waited for the formal recall. He returned to England a disgraced man. Yet even then there was public spirit enough among the English people to refuse to ratify any sentence of disgrace upon him. When he landed at Plymouth, he was received with acclamations by the population, although the Government had prevented any of the official honour usually shown to returning governors from being offered to

him. Mr. John Stuart Mill has claimed with modest firmness and with perfect justice a leading share in influencing public opinion in favour of Lord Durham. 'Lord Durham,' he says in his Autobiography, 'was bitterly attacked from all sides, inveighed against by enemies, given up by timid friends; while those who would willingly have defended him did not know what to say. He appeared to be returning a defeated and discredited man. I had followed the Canadian events from the beginning; I had been one of the prompters of his prompters; his policy was almost exactly what mine would have been, and I was in a position to defend it. I wrote and published a manifesto in the [Westminster] *Review*, in which I took the very highest ground in his behalf, claiming for him not mere acquittal, but praise and honour. Instantly a number of other writers took up the tone. I believe there was a portion of truth in what Lord Durham, soon after, with polite exaggeration, said to me, that to this article might be ascribed the almost triumphal reception which he met with on his arrival in England. I believe it to have been the word in season which at a critical moment does much to decide the result; the touch which determines whether a stone set in motion at the top of an eminence shall roll down on one side or on the other. All hopes connected with Lord Durham as a politician soon vanished; but with regard to Canadian and generally to colonial policy the cause was gained. Lord Durham's report, written by Charles Buller, partly under the inspiration of Wakefield, began a new era; its recommendations, extending to complete internal self-government, were in full operation in Canada within two or three years, and have been since extended to nearly all the other colonies of European race which have any claim to the character of important communities.' In this instance the *victa causa* pleased not only Cato, but in the end the gods as well.

Lord Durham's report was acknowledged by enemies as well as by the most impartial critics to be a masterly document. As Mr. Mill has said, it laid the foundation of the political success and social prosperity not only of Canada but of all the other important colonies. After having explained in the most exhaustive manner the causes of discontent and backwardness in Canada, it went on to recommend that the government of the colony should be put as much as possible into the hands of the colonists themselves, that they themselves should execute as well as make the laws, the limit of the Imperial Government's interference being in such matters as affect the relations of the colony with the mother country, such as the constitution and form of government, the regulation of foreign relations and trade, and the disposal of the public lands. Lord Durham proposed to establish a thoroughly good system of municipal institutions; to secure the

independence of the judges; to make all provincial officers, except the governor and his secretary, responsible to the colonial legislature; and to repeal all former legislation with respect to the reserves of land for the clergy. Finally, he proposed that the provinces of Canada should be reunited politically and should become one legislature, containing the representatives of both races and of all districts. It is significant that the report also recommended that in any act to be introduced for this purpose, a provision should be made by which all or any of the other North American colonies should on the application of their legislatures and with the consent of Canada be admitted into the Canadian Union. Thus the separation which Fox thought unwise was to be abolished, and the Canadas were to be fused into one system, which Lord Durham would have had a federation. In brief, Lord Durham proposed to make the Canadas self-governing as regards their internal affairs, and the germ of a federal union.

It is not necessary to describe in detail the steps by which the Government gradually introduced the recommendations of Lord Durham to Parliament and carried them to success. Lord Glenelg, one of the feeblest and most apathetic of colonial secretaries, had retired from office, partly, no doubt, because of the attacks in Parliament on his administration of Canadian affairs. He was succeeded at the Colonial Office by Lord Normanby, and Lord Normanby gave way in a few months to Lord John Russell, who was full of energy and earnestness. Lord Durham's successor and disciple in the work of Canadian government, Lord Sydenham—best known as Mr. Charles Poulett Thomson, one of the pioneers of free trade—received Lord John Russell's cordial co-operation and support. Lord John Russell introduced into the House of Commons a bill which he described as intended to lay the foundation of a permanent settlement of the affairs of Canada. The measure was postponed for a session because some statesmen thought that it would not be acceptable to the Canadians themselves. Some little sputterings of the rebellion had also lingered after Lord Durham's return to this country, and these for a short time had directed attention away from the policy of reorganisation. In 1840, however, the Act was passed which reunited Upper and Lower Canada on the basis proposed by Lord Durham. Further legislation disposed of the clergy reserve lands for the general benefit of all churches and denominations. The way was made clear for that scheme which in times nearer to our own has formed the Dominion of Canada.

Lord Durham did not live to see the success of the policy he had recommended. We may anticipate the close of his career. Within a few days after the passing of the Canada Government Bill he died at Cowes, in the

Isle of Wight, on July 28, 1840. He was then little more than forty-eight years of age. He had for some time been in failing health, and it cannot be doubted that the mortification attending his Canadian mission had worn away his strength. His proud and sensitive spirit could ill bear the contradictions and humiliations that had been forced upon him. His was an eager and a passionate nature, full of that *sæva indignatio* which by his own acknowledgment tortured the heart of Swift. He wanted to the success of his political career that proud patience which the gods are said to love, and by virtue of which great men live down misappreciation, and hold out until they see themselves justified and hear the reproaches turn into cheers. But if Lord Durham's personal career was in any way a failure, his policy for the Canadas was a splendid success. It established the principles of colonial government. There were undoubtedly defects in the construction of the actual scheme which Lord Durham initiated, and which Lord Sydenham, who died not long after him, instituted. The legislative union of the two Canadas was in itself a makeshift, and was only adopted as such. Lord Durham would have had it otherwise if he might; but he did not see his way then to anything like the complete federation scheme afterwards adopted. But the success of the policy lay in the broad principles it established, and to which other colonial systems as well as that of the Dominion of Canada owe their strength and security to-day. One may say, with little help from the merely fanciful, that the rejoicings of emancipated colonies might have been in his dying ears as he sank into his early grave.

## CHAPTER IV

### SCIENCE AND SPEED.

THE opening of the reign of Queen Victoria coincided with the introduction of many of the great discoveries and applications in science, industry and commerce which we consider specially representative of modern civilisation. A reign which saw in its earlier years the application of the electric current to the task of transmitting messages, the first successful attempts to make use of steam for the business of Transatlantic navigation, the general development of the railway system all over these countries, and the introduction of the penny post, must be considered to have obtained for itself, had it secured no other memorials, an abiding place in history. A distinguished author has lately inveighed against the spirit which would rank such improvements as those just mentioned with the genuine

triumphs of the human race, and has gone so far as to insist that there is nothing in any such which might not be expected from the self-interested contrivings of a very inferior animal nature. Amid the tendency to glorify beyond measure the mere mechanical improvements of modern civilisation, it is natural that there should arise some angry questioning, some fierce disparagement of all that it has done. There will always be natures to which the philosophy of contemplation must seem far nobler than the philosophy which expresses itself in mechanical action. It may, however, be taken as certain that no people who were ever great in thought and in art wilfully neglected to avail themselves of all possible contrivances for making life less laborious by the means of mechanical and artificial contrivance. The Greeks were to the best of their opportunity, and when at the highest point of their glory as an artistic race, as eager for the application of all scientific and mechanical contrivances to the business of life as the most practical and boastful Manchester man or Chicago man of our own day. We shall afterwards see that the reign of Queen Victoria came to have a literature, an art, and a philosophy distinctly its own. For the moment we have to do with its industrial science; or at least with the first remarkable movements in that direction which accompanied the opening of the reign. This at least must be said for them, that they have changed the conditions of human life for us in such a manner as to make the history of the past forty or fifty years almost absolutely distinct from that of any preceding period. In all that part of our social life which is affected by industrial and mechanical appliances, the man of the latter part of the eighteenth century was less widely removed from the Englishman of the days of the Paston Letters than we are removed from the ways of the eighteenth century. The man of the eighteenth century travelled on land and sea in much the same way that his forefathers had done hundreds of years before. His communications by letter with his fellows were carried on in very much the same method. He got his news from abroad and at home after the same slow uncertain fashion. His streets and houses were lighted very much as they might have been when Mr. Pepys was in London. His ideas of drainage and ventilation were equally elementary and simple. We see a complete revolution in all these things. A man of the present day suddenly thrust back fifty years in life, would find himself almost as awkwardly unsuited to the ways of that time as if he were sent back to the age when the Romans occupied Britain. He would find himself harassed at every step he took. He could do hardly anything as he does it to-day. Whatever the moral and philosophical value of the change in the eyes of thinkers too lofty to concern themselves with the common ways and doings of human

life, this is certain at least, that the change is of immense historical importance, and that even if we look upon life as a mere pageant and show, interesting to wise men only by its curious changes, a wise man of this school could hardly have done better, if the choice lay with him, than to desire that the lines of his life might be so cast as to fall into the earlier part of this present reign.

It is a somewhat curious coincidence, that in the year when Professor Wheatstone and Mr. Cooke took out their first patent 'for improvements in giving signals and sounding alarms in distant places by means of electric currents transmitted through metallic circuit,' Professor Morse, the American electrician, applied to Congress for aid in the construction and carrying on of a small electric telegraph to convey messages a short distance, and made the application without success. In the following year he came to this country to obtain a patent for his invention; but he was refused. He had come too late. Our own countrymen were beforehand with him. Very soon after we find experiments made with the electric telegraph between Euston Square and Camden Town. These experiments were made under the authority of the London and North-Western Railway Company, immediately on the taking out of the patent by Messrs. Wheatstone and Cooke. Mr. Robert Stephenson was one of those who came to watch the operation of this new and wonderful attempt to make the currents of the air man's faithful Ariel. The London and Birmingham Railway was opened through its whole length in 1838. The Liverpool and Preston line was opened in the same year. The Liverpool and Birmingham had been opened in the year before; the London and Croydon was opened the year after. The Act for the transmission of the mails by railways was passed in 1838. In the same year it was noted as an unparalleled, and to many an almost incredible, triumph of human energy and science over time and space, that a locomotive had been able to travel at a speed of thirty-seven miles an hour.

'The prospect of travelling from the metropolis to Liverpool, a distance of 210 miles, in ten hours, calls forcibly to mind the tales of fairies and genii by which we were amused in our youth, and contrasts forcibly with the fact, attested on the personal experience of the writer of this notice, that about the commencement of the present century, this same journey occupied a space of sixty hours.' These are the words of a writer who gives an interesting account of the railways of England during the first year of the reign of Queen Victoria. In the same volume from which this extract is taken an allusion is made to the possibility of steam communication being successfully established between England and the United States. 'Preparations on a gigantic scale,' a writer is able to announce, 'are now in a state of great forwardness for trying an experiment in steam

navigation which has been the subject of much controversy among scientific men. Ships of an enormous size, furnished with steam power equal to the force of 400 horses and upwards, will, before our next volume shall be prepared, have probably decided the question whether this description of vessels can, in the present state of our knowledge, profitably engage in Transatlantic voyages. It is possible that these attempts may fail, a result which is indeed predicted by high authorities on this subject. We are more sanguine in our hopes; but should these be disappointed, we cannot, if we are to judge from our past progress, doubt that longer experience and a further application of inventive genius will at no very distant day render practicable and profitable by this means the longest voyages in which the adventurous spirit of man will lead him to embark.' The experiment thus alluded to was made with perfect success. The *Sirius*, the *Great Western*, and the *Royal William* accomplished voyages between New York and this country in the early part of 1838; and it was remarked, that 'Transatlantic voyages by means of steam may now be said to be as easy of accomplishment, with ships of adequate size and power, as the passage between London and Margate.' The *Great Western* crossed the ocean from Bristol to New York in fifteen days. She was followed by the *Sirius*, which left Cork for New York, and made the passage in seventeen days. The controversy as to the possibility of such voyages, which was settled by the *Great Western* and the *Sirius*, had no reference to the actual safety of such an experiment. During seven years the mails for the Mediterranean had been despatched by means of steamers. The doubt was as to the possibility of stowing in a vessel so large a quantity of coal or other fuel as would enable her to accomplish her voyage across the Atlantic, where there could be no stopping place and no possibility of taking in new stores. It was found, to the delight of all those who believed in the practicability of the enterprise, that the quantity of fuel which each vessel had on board when she left her port of departure proved amply sufficient for the completion of the voyage. Neither the *Sirius* nor the *Great Western* was the first vessel to cross the Atlantic by means of steam propulsion. Nearly twenty years before, a vessel called the *Savannah*, built at New York, crossed the ocean to Liverpool, and some years later an English-built steamer made several voyages between Holland and the Dutch West Indian colonies as a packet vessel in the service of that Government. Indeed, a voyage had been made round the Cape of Good Hope more lately still by a steam ship. These expeditions, however, had really little or nothing to do with the problem which was solved by the voyages of the *Sirius* and the *Great Western*. In the former instances the steam power was employed merely as an auxiliary. The vessel made

as much use of her steam propulsion as she could, but she had to rely a good deal on her capacity as a sailer. This was quite a different thing from the enterprise of the *Sirius* and the *Great Western*, which was to cross the ocean by steam propulsion and steam propulsion only. It is evident that so long as the steam power was to be used only as an auxiliary, it would be impossible to reckon on speed and certainty of arrival. The doubt was whether a steamer could carry, with her cargo and passengers, fuel enough to serve for the whole of her voyage across the Atlantic. The expeditions of the *Sirius* and the *Great Western* settled the whole question. It was never again a matter of controversy. It is enough to say that two years after the *Great Western* went out from Bristol to New York the Cunard line of steamers was established. The steam communication between Liverpool and New York became thenceforth as regular and as unvarying a part of the business of commerce as the journeys of the trains on the Great Western Railway between London and Bristol. It was not Bristol which benefited most by the Transatlantic voyages. They made the greatness of Liverpool. Year by year the sceptre of the commercial marine passed away from Bristol to Liverpool. No port in the world can show a line of docks like those of Liverpool. There the stately Mersey flows for miles between the superb and massive granite walls of the enclosures within whose shelter the ships of the world are arrayed as if on parade for the admiration of the traveller who has hitherto been accustomed to the irregular and straggling arrangements of the docks of London or of New York.

On July 5, 1839, an unusually late period of the year, the Chancellor of the Exchequer brought forward his annual budget. The most important part of the financial statement, so far as later times are concerned, is set out in a resolution proposed by the finance minister, which perhaps represents the greatest social improvement brought about by legislation in modern times. The Chancellor proposed a resolution declaring that 'it is expedient to reduce the postage on letters to one uniform rate of one penny charged upon every letter of a weight to be hereafter fixed by law; parliamentary privileges of franking being abolished and official franking strictly regulated; this House pledging itself at the same time to make good any deficiency of revenue which may be occasioned by such an alteration in the rates of the existing duties.' Up to this time the rates of postage had been both high and various. They were varying both as to distance, and as to the weight and even the size or the shape of a letter. The district or London post was a separate branch of the postal department; and the charge for the transmission of letters was made on a different scale in London from that which prevailed between town and town. The

average postage on every chargeable letter throughout the United Kingdom was sixpence farthing. A letter from London to Brighton cost eight pence; to Aberdeen one shilling and three pence halfpenny; to Belfast one shilling and four pence. Nor was this all; for if the letter were written on more than one sheet of paper, it came under the operation of a higher scale of charge. Members of Parliament had the privilege of franking letters to a certain limited extent; members of the Government had the privilege of franking to an unlimited extent. It is perhaps as well to mention, for the sake of being intelligible to all readers in an age which has not, in this country at least, known practically the beauty and liberality of the franking privilege, that it consisted in the right of the privileged person to send his own or any other person's letters through the post free of charge by merely writing his name on the outside. This meant, in plain words, that the letters of the class who could best afford to pay for them went free of charge, and that those who could least afford to pay had to pay double—the expense, that is to say, of carrying their own letters and the letters of the privileged and exempt.

The greatest grievances were felt everywhere because of this absurd system. It had along with its other disadvantages that of encouraging what may be called the smuggling of letters. Everywhere sprang up organisations for the illicit conveyance of correspondence at lower rates than those imposed by the Government. The proprietors of almost every kind of public conveyance are said to have been engaged in this unlawful but certainly not very unnatural or unjustifiable traffic. Five-sixths of all the letters sent between Manchester and London were said to have been conveyed for years by this process. One great mercantile house was proved to have been in the habit of sending sixty-seven letters by what we may call this underground post-office, for every one on which they paid the Government charges. It was not merely to escape heavy cost that these stratagems were employed. As there was an additional charge when a letter was written on more sheets than one, there was a frequent and almost a constant tampering by officials with the sanctity of sealed letters for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not they ought to be taxed on the higher scale. It was proved that in the years between 1815 and 1835, while the population had increased thirty per cent., and the stage coach duty had increased one hundred and twenty-eight per cent., the Post Office revenues had shown no increase at all. In other countries the postal revenue had been on the increase steadily during that time; in the United States the revenue had actually trebled, although then and later the postal system of America was full of faults which at that day only seemed intelligible or excusable when placed in comparison with those of our own system.

Mr. (afterwards Sir Rowland) Hill is the man to whom this country, and indeed all civilisation, owes the adoption of the cheap and uniform system. His plan has been adopted by every State which professes to have a postal system at all. Mr. Hill belonged to a remarkable family. His father, Thomas Wright Hill, was a teacher, a man of advanced and practical views in popular education, a devoted lover of science, an advocate of civil and religious liberty, and a sort of celebrity in the Birmingham of his day, where he took a bold and active part in trying to defend the house of Dr. Priestley against the mob who attacked it. He had five sons, every one of whom made himself more or less conspicuous as a practical reformer in one path or another. The eldest of the sons was Matthew Davenport Hill, the philanthropic recorder of Birmingham, who did so much for prison reform and for the reclamation of juvenile offenders. The third son was Rowland Hill, the author of the cheap postal system. Rowland Hill when a little weakly child began to show some such precocious love for arithmetical calculations as Pascal showed for mathematics. His favourite amusement as a child was to lie on the hearthrug and count up figures by the hour together. As he grew up he became teacher of mathematics in his father's school. Afterwards he was appointed secretary to the South Australian Commission, and rendered much valuable service in the organisation of the colony of South Australia. His early love of masses of figures it may have been which in the first instance turned his attention to the number of letters passing through the Post Office, the proportion they bore to the number of the population, the cost of carrying them, and the amount which the Post Office authorities charged for the conveyance of a single letter. A picturesque and touching little illustration of the veritable hardships of the existing system seems to have quickened his interest in a reform of it. Miss Martineau thus tells the story:—

'Coleridge, when a young man, was walking through the Lake district, when he one day saw the postman deliver a letter to a woman at a cottage door. The woman turned it over and examined it, and then returned it, saying she could not pay the postage, which was a shilling. Hearing that the letter was from her brother, Coleridge paid the postage, in spite of the manifest unwillingness of the woman. As soon as the postman was out of sight she showed Coleridge how his money had been wasted, as far as she was concerned. The sheet was blank. There was an agreement between her brother and herself that as long as all went well with him he should send a blank sheet in this way once a quarter; and she thus had tidings of him without expense of postage. Most persons would have remembered this incident as a curious story to tell;

but there was one mind which wakened up at once to a sense of the significance of the fact. It struck Mr. Rowland Hill that there must be something wrong in a system which drove a brother and sister to cheating in order to gratify their desire to hear of one another's welfare.'

Mr. Hill gradually worked out for himself a comprehensive scheme of reform. He put it before the world early in 1837. The public were taken by surprise when the plan came before them in the shape of a pamphlet which its author modestly entitled 'Post Office Reform; its importance and practicability.' The root of Mr. Hill's system lay in the fact, made evident by him beyond dispute, that the actual cost of the conveyance of letters through the post was very trifling, and was but little increased by the distance over which they had to be carried.

His proposal was therefore that the rates of postage should be diminished to the minimum; that at the same time the speed of conveyance should be increased, and that there should be much greater frequency of despatch. His principle was, in fact, the very opposite of that which had prevailed in the calculations of the authorities. Their idea was that the higher the charge for letters the greater the return to the revenue. He started on the assumption that the smaller the charge the greater the profit. He therefore recommended the substitution of one uniform charge of one penny the half-ounce, without reference to the distance within the limits of the United Kingdom which the letter had to be carried. The Post Office authorities were at first uncompromising in their opposition to the scheme. The Postmaster-General, Lord Lichfield, said in the House of Lords, that of all the wild and extravagant schemes he had ever heard of, it was the wildest and most extravagant. 'The mails,' he said, 'will have to carry twelve times as much weight, and therefore the charge for transmission instead of 100,000*l.*, as now, must be twelve times that amount. The walls of the Post Office would burst, the whole area in which the building stands would not be large enough to receive the clerks and the letters.' It is impossible not to be struck by the paradoxical peculiarity of this argument. Because the change would be so much welcomed by the public, Lord Lichfield argued that it ought not to be made. He did not fall back upon the then familiar assertion that the public would not send anything like the number of letters the advocates of the scheme expected. He argued that they would send so many as to make it troublesome for the Post Office authorities to deal with them. In plain words, it would be such an immense accommodation to the population in general, that the officials could not undertake the trouble of carrying it into effect. Another Post Office official, Colonel Maberley, was at all events more liberal. 'My constant language,' he said afterwards, 'to the heads of the departments was

—This plan we know will fail. It is your duty to take care that no obstruction is placed in the way of it by the heads of the department, and by the Post Office. The allegation, I have not the least doubt, will be made at a subsequent period, that this plan has failed in consequence of the unwillingness of the Government to carry it into fair execution. It is our duty as servants of the Government to take care that no blame eventually shall fall on the Government through any unwillingness of ours to carry it into proper effect.' It is, perhaps, less surprising that the routine mind of officials should have seen no future but failure for the scheme, when so vigorous and untrammelled a thinker as Sydney Smith spoke with anger and contempt of the fact that 'a million of revenue is given up in the nonsensical Penny Post scheme, to please my old, excellent, and universally dissentient friend, Noah Warburton.' Mr. Warburton was then member for Bridport, and with Mr. Wallace, another member of Parliament, was very active in supporting and promoting the views of Mr. Hill. 'I admire the Whig Ministry,' Sydney Smith went on to say, 'and think they have done more good things than all the ministries since the Revolution; but these concessions are sad and unworthy marks of weakness, and fill reasonable men with alarm.'

It will be seen from this remark alone that the Ministry had yielded somewhat more readily than might have been expected to the arguments of Mr. Hill. At the time his pamphlet appeared a commission was actually engaged in inquiring into the condition of the Post Office department. Their attention was drawn to Mr. Hill's plan, and they gave it a careful consideration, and reported in its favour, although the Post Office authorities were convinced that it must involve an unbearable loss of revenue. In Parliament Mr. Wallace, whose name has been already mentioned, moved for a committee to inquire into the whole subject, and especially to examine the mode recommended for charging and collecting postage, in the pamphlet of Mr. Hill. The committee gave the subject a very patient consideration, and at length made a report recommending uniform charges and prepayment by stamps. That part of Mr. Hill's plan which suggested the use of postage stamps was adopted by him on the advice of Mr. Charles Knight. The Government took up the scheme with some spirit and liberality. The revenue that year showed a deficiency, but they determined to run the further risk which the proposal involved. The commercial community had naturally been stirred greatly by the project which promised so much relief and advantage. Sydney Smith was very much mistaken indeed when he fancied that it was only to please his old and excellent friend, Mr. Warburton, that the Ministry gave way to the innovation. Petitions from all the commercial communities were pouring in to support the plan,

and to ask that at least it should have a fair trial. The Government at length determined to bring in a bill which should provide for the almost immediate introduction of Mr. Hill's scheme, and for the abolition of the franking system except in the case of official letters actually sent on business directly belonging to her Majesty's service. The bill declared, as an introductory step, that the charge for postage should be at the rate of four pence for each letter under half an ounce in weight, irrespective of distance, within the limits of the United Kingdom. This, however, was to be only a beginning; for on January 10, 1840, the postage was fixed at the uniform rate of one penny per letter of not more than half an ounce in weight. The introductory measure was not, of course, carried without opposition in both Houses of Parliament. The Duke of Wellington in his characteristic way declared that he strongly objected to the scheme, but as the Government had evidently set their hearts upon it, he recommended the House of Lords not to offer any opposition to it. In the House of Commons it was opposed by Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Goulburn, both of whom strongly condemned the whole scheme as likely to involve the country in vast loss of revenue. The measure, however, passed into law. Some idea of the effect it has produced upon the postal correspondence of the country may be gathered from the fact that in 1839, the last year of the heavy postage, the number of letters delivered in Great Britain and Ireland was a little more than eighty-two millions, which included some five millions and a half of franked letters returning nothing to the revenues of the country; whereas, in 1875, more than a thousand millions of letters were delivered in the United Kingdom. The population during the same time has not nearly doubled itself. It has already been remarked that the principle of Sir Rowland Hill's reform has since been put into operation in every civilised country in the world. It may be added that before long we shall in all human probability see an inter-oceanic postage established at a rate as low as people sometimes thought Sir Rowland Hill a madman for recommending as applicable to our inland post. The time is not far distant when a letter will be carried from London to San Francisco, or to Tokio in Japan, at a rate of charge as small as that which made financiers stare and laugh when it was suggested as profitable remuneration for carrying a letter from London to the towns of Sussex or Hertfordshire. The 'Penny Post,' let it be said, is an older institution than that which Sir Rowland Hill introduced. A penny post for the conveyance of letters had been set up in London so long ago as 1683; and it was adopted or annexed by the Government some years after. An effort was even made to set up a halfpenny post in London, in opposition to the official penny post, in 1708; but the Government soon crushed this vexatious and intrusive rival. In 1738 Dr. Johnson writes

to Mr. Cave 'to entreat that you will be pleased to inform me, by the penny post, whether you resolve to print the poem.' After a while the Government changed their penny post to a twopenny post, and gradually made a distinction between district and other postal systems, and contrived to swell the price for deliveries of all kinds. Long before even this time of the penny post, the old records of the city of Bristol contain an account of the payment of one penny for the carriage of letters to London. It need hardly be explained, however, that a penny in that time, or even in 1683, was a payment of very different value indeed from the modest sum which Sir Rowland Hill was successful in establishing. The ancient penny post resembled the modern penny post only in name.

## CHAPTER V.

### CHARTISM.

It cannot, however, be said that all the omens under which the new Queen's reign opened at home were as auspicious as the coincidences which made it contemporary with the first chapters of these new and noble developments in the history of science and invention. On the contrary, it began amid many grim and unpromising conditions in our social affairs. The winter of 1837–8 was one of unusual severity and distress. There would have been much discontent and grumbling in any case among the class described by French writers as the *prolétaire*; but the complaints were aggravated by a common belief that the young Queen was wholly under the influence of a frivolous and selfish minister, who occupied her with amusements while the poor were starving. It does not appear that there was at any time the slightest justification for such a belief; but it prevailed among the working classes and the poor very generally, and added to the sufferings of genuine want the bitterness of imaginary wrong. Popular education was little looked after; so far as the State was concerned, might be said not to be looked after at all. The laws of political economy were as yet only within the appreciation of a few, who were regarded not uncommonly, because of their theories, somewhat as phrenologists or mesmerists might be looked on in a more enlightened time. Some writers have made a great deal of the case of Thom and his disciples as evidence of the extraordinary ignorance that prevailed. Thom was a broken-down brewer, and in fact a madman, who had for some time been going about in Canterbury and other parts of Kent bedizened in fantastic costume, and styling himself at first Sir William Courtenay, of Powder-

ham Castle, Knight of Malta, King of Jerusalem, king of the gipsy races, and we know not what else. He announced himself as a great political reformer, and for awhile he succeeded in getting many to believe in and support him. He was afterwards confined for some time in a lunatic asylum, and when he came out he presented himself to the ignorant peasantry in the character of a second Messiah. He found many followers and believers again, among a humbler class indeed than those whom he had formerly won over. Much of his influence over the poor Kentish labourers was due to his denunciations of the new Poor Law, which was then popularly hated and feared with an almost insane intensity of feeling. Thom told them he had come to regenerate the whole world, and also to save his followers from the new Poor Law; and the latter announcement commended the former. He assembled a crowd of his supporters, and undertook to lead them to an attack on Canterbury. With his own hand he shot dead a policeman who endeavoured to oppose his movements, exactly as a saviour of society of bolder pretensions and greater success did at Boulogne not long after. Two companies of soldiers came out from Canterbury to disperse the rioters. The officer in command was shot dead by Thom. Thom's followers then charged the unexpecting soldiers so fiercely that for a moment there was some confusion; but the second company fired a volley which stretched Thom and several of his adherents lifeless on the field. That was an end of the rising. Several of Thom's followers were afterwards tried for murder, convicted and sentenced; but some pity was felt for their ignorance and their delusion, and they were not consigned to death. Long after the fall of their preposterous hero and saint, many of Thom's disciples believed that he would return from the grave to carry out the promised work of his mission. All this was lamentable, but could hardly be regarded as specially characteristic of the early years of the present reign. The Thom delusion was not much more absurd than the Tichborne mania of a later day. Down to our own time there are men and women among the Social Democrats of cultured Germany who still cherish the hope that their idol Ferdinand Lassalle will come back from the dead to lead and guide them.

But there were political and social dangers in the opening of the present reign more serious than any that could have been conjured up by a crazy man in a fantastic dress. There were delusions having deeper roots and showing a more inviting shelter than any that a religious fanatic of the vulgar type could cause to spring up in our society.

Only a few weeks after the coronation of the Queen a great Radical meeting was held in Birmingham. A manifesto was adopted there which afterwards came to be known as the Chartist petition. With that movement

Chartism began to be one of the most disturbing influences of the political life of the country. It is a movement which, although its influence may now be said to have wholly passed away, well deserves to have its history fully written. For ten years it agitated England. It sometimes seemed to threaten an actual uprising of all the *prolétaire* against what were then the political and social institutions of the country. It might have been a very serious danger if the State had been involved in any external difficulties. It was backed by much genuine enthusiasm, passion, and intelligence. It appealed strongly and naturally to whatever there was of discontent among the working classes. It afforded a most acceptable and convenient means by which ambitious politicians of the self-seeking order could raise themselves into temporary importance. Its fierce and fitful flame went out at last under the influence of the clear, strong and steady light of political reform and education. The one great lesson it teaches is, that political agitation lives and is formidable only by virtue of what is reasonable in its demands. Thousands of ignorant and miserable men all over the country joined the Chartist agitation who cared nothing about the substantial value of its political claims. They were poor, they were overworked, they were badly paid, their lives were altogether wretched. They got into their heads some wild idea that the People's Charter would give them better food and wages and lighter work if it were obtained, and that for that very reason the aristocrats and the officials would not grant it. No political concessions could really have satisfied these men. If the Charter had been granted in 1838, they would no doubt have been as dissatisfied as ever in 1839. But the discontent of these poor creatures would have brought with it little danger to the State if it had not become part of the support of an organisation which could show some sound and good reason for the demands it made. The moment that the clear and practical political grievances were dealt with the organisation melted away. Vague discontent, however natural and excusable it may be, is only formidable in politics when it helps to swell the strength and the numbers of a crowd which calls for some reform that can be made and is withheld. One of the vulgarest fallacies of statecraft is to declare that it is of no use granting the reforms which would satisfy reasonable demands, because there are still unreasonable agitators whom these will not satisfy. Get the reasonable men on your side, and you need not fear the unreasonable. This is the lesson taught to statesmen by the Chartist agitation.

A funeral oration over Chartism was pronounced by Sir John Campbell, then Attorney-General, afterwards Lord Chief Justice Campbell, at a public dinner at Edinburgh on October 24, 1839. He spoke at some length and with much complacency of Chartism as an agitation which had

passed away. Some ten days afterwards occurred the most formidable outburst of Chartism that had been known up to that time, and Chartism continued to be an active and a disturbing influence in England for nearly ten years after. If Sir John Campbell had told his friends and constituents at the Edinburgh dinner that the influence of Chartism was just about to make itself really felt, he would have shown himself a somewhat more acute politician than we now understand him to be. Seldom has a public man setting up to be a political authority made a worse hit than he did in that memorable declaration. Campbell was indeed only a clever shrewd lawyer of the hard and narrow class. He never made any pretension to statesmanship, or even to great political knowledge; and his unfortunate blunder might be passed over without notice were it not that it illustrates fairly enough the manner in which men of better information and judgment than he were at that time in the habit of disposing of all inconvenient political problems. The Attorney-General was aware that there had been a few riots and a few arrests, and that the law had been what he would call vindicated; and as he had no manner of sympathy with the motives which could lead men to distress themselves and their friends about imaginary charters, he assumed that there was an end of the matter. It did not occur to him to ask himself whether there might not be some underlying causes to explain if not to excuse the agitation that just then began to disturb the country, and that continued to disturb it for so many years. Even if he had inquired into the subject, it is not likely that he would have come to any wiser conclusion about it. The dramatic instinct, if we may be allowed to call it so, which enables a man to put himself for the moment into the condition and mood of men entirely unlike himself in feelings and conditions, is an indispensable element of real statesmanship; but it is the rarest of all gifts among politicians of the second order. If Sir John Campbell had turned his attention to the Chartist question, he would only have found that a number of men, for the most part poor and ignorant, were complaining of grievances where he could not for himself see any substantial grievances at all. That would have been enough for him. If a solid, wealthy and rising lawyer could not see any cause for grumbling, he would have made up his mind that no reasonable persons worthy the consideration of sensible legislators would continue to grumble after they had been told by those in authority that it was their business to keep quiet. But if he had, on the other hand, looked with the light of sympathetic intelligence, of that dramatic instinct which has just been mentioned, at the condition of the classes among whom Chartism was then rife, he would have seen that it was not likely the agitation could be put down by a few prosecutions and a few arrests, and the censure of a prosperous

Attorney-General. He would have seen that Chartism was not a cause but a consequence. The intelligence of a very ordinary man who approached the question in an impartial mood might have seen that Chartism was the expression of a vague discontent with very positive grievances and evils.

We have in our time outlived the days of political abstractions. The catch-words which thrilled our forefathers with emotion on one side or the other fall with hardly any meaning on our ears. We smile at such phrases as 'the rights of man.' We hardly know what is meant by talking of 'the people' as the words were used long ago when 'the people' was understood to mean a vast mass of wronged persons who had no representation and were oppressed by privilege and the aristocracy. We seldom talk of 'liberty;' anyone venturing to found a theory or even a declamation on some supposed deprival of liberty would soon find himself in the awkward position of being called on to give a scientific definition of what he understood liberty to be. He would be as much puzzled as were certain English working men, who desiring to express to Mr. John Stuart Mill their sympathy with what they called in the slang of continental democracy 'the Revolution,' were calmly bidden by the great Liberal thinker to ask themselves what they meant by 'the Revolution,' which revolution, what revolution, and why they sympathised with it. But perhaps we are all a little too apt to think that because these abstractions have no living meaning now, they never had any living meaning at all. They convey no manner of clear idea in England now, but it does not by any means follow that they never conveyed any such idea. The phrase which Mr. Mill so properly condemned when he found it in the mouths of English working men had a very intelligible and distinct meaning when it first came to be used in France and throughout the Continent. 'The Revolution' expressed a clear reality, as recognisable by the intelligence of all who heard it as the name of Free Trade or of Ultramontanism to men of our time. 'The Revolution' was the principle which was asserting all over Europe the overthrow of the old absolute power of kings, and it described it just as well as any word could do. It is meaningless in our day for the very reason that it was full of meaning then. So it was with 'the people' and 'the rights of the people' and the 'rights of labour,' and all the other grandiloquent phrases which seem to us so empty and so meaningless now. They are empty and meaningless at the present hour; but they have no application now chiefly because they had application then.

The Reform Bill of 1832 had been necessarily and perhaps naturally a class measure. It had done great things for the constitutional system of England. It had averted a revolution which without some such concession would probably have been inevitable. It had settled for ever the question

which was so fiercely and so gravely debated during the discussions of the reform years, whether the English Constitution is or is not based upon a system of popular representation. To many at present it may seem hardly credible that sane men could have denied the existence of the representative principle. But during the debates on the great Reform Bill such a denial was the strong point of many of the leading opponents of the measure, including the Duke of Wellington himself. The principle of the Constitution, it was soberly argued, is that the Sovereign invites whatever communities or interests he thinks fit to send in persons to Parliament to take counsel with him on the affairs of the nation. This idea was got rid of by the Reform Bill. That bill abolished fifty-six nomination or rotten boroughs, and took away half the representation from thirty others; it disposed of the seats thus obtained by giving sixty-five additional representatives to the counties, and conferring the right of returning members on Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, and some thirty-nine large and prosperous towns which had previously had no representation; while, as Lord John Russell said in his speech when he introduced the bill in March 1831, 'a ruined mound' sent two representatives to Parliament; 'three niches in a stone wall' sent two representatives to Parliament; 'a park where no houses were to be seen' sent two representatives to Parliament. The bill introduced a 10*l.* household qualification for boroughs, and extended the county franchise to leaseholders and copyholders. But it left the working classes almost altogether out of the franchise. Not merely did it confer no political emancipation on them, but it took away in many places the peculiar franchises which made the working men voters. There were communities—such, for example, as that of Preston, in Lancashire—where the system of franchise existing created something like universal suffrage. All this was smoothed away, if such an expression may be used, by the Reform Bill. In truth the Reform Bill broke down the monopoly which the aristocracy and landed classes had enjoyed, and admitted the middle classes to a share of the law-making power. The representation was divided between the aristocracy and the middle class, instead of being, as before, the exclusive possession of the former.

The working class, in the opinion of many of their ablest and most influential representatives, were not merely left out but shouldered out. This was all the more exasperating because the excitement and agitation by the strength of which the Reform Bill was carried in the teeth of so much resistance were kept up by the working men. There was besides, at the time of the Reform Bill, a very high degree of what may be called the temperature of the French Revolution still heating the senses and influencing the judgment even of the aristocratic leaders of the movement. What

Richter calls the 'seed-grains' of the revolutionary doctrines had been blown abroad so widely that they rested in some of the highest as well as in most of the lowliest places. Some of the Reform leaders, Lord Durham for instance, were prepared to go much farther in the way of Radicalism than at a later period Mr. Cobden or Mr. Bright would have gone. There was more than once a sort of appeal to the working men of the country which, however differently it may have been meant, certainly sounded in their ears as if it were an intimation that in the event of the bill being resisted too long it might be necessary to try what the strength of a popular uprising could do. Many years after, in the defence of the Irish state prisoners at Clonmel, the counsel who pleaded their cause insisted that they had warrant for their conduct in certain proceedings which were in preparation during the Reform agitation. He talked with undisguised significance of the teacher being in the Ministry and the pupils in the dock; and quoted Captain Macheath to the effect that if laws were made equally for every degree, there might even then be rare company on Tyburn tree. It is not necessary to attach too much importance to assertions of this kind, or to accept them as sober contributions to history. But they are very instructive as a means of enabling us to understand the feeling of soreness which remained in the minds of large masses of the population when after the passing of the Reform Bill they found themselves left out in the cold. Rightly or wrongly they believed that their strength had been kept in reserve or *in terrorem* to secure the carrying of the Reform Bill, and that when it was carried they were immediately thrown over by those whom they had thus helped to pass it. Therefore at the time when the young Sovereign ascended the throne, the working classes in all the large towns were in a state of profound disappointment and discontent, almost indeed of disaffection. Chartism was beginning to succeed to the Reform agitation. The leaders who had come from the ranks of the aristocracy had been discarded or had withdrawn. In some cases they had withdrawn in perfect good faith, believing sincerely that they had done the work which they undertook to do, and that that was all the country required. Men drawn more immediately from the working class itself, or who had in some way been dropped down by a class higher in the social scale, took up the popular leadership now.

Chartism may be said to have sprung definitively into existence in consequence of the formal declarations of the leaders of the Liberal party in Parliament that they did not intend to push reform any farther. At the opening of the first Parliament of Queen Victoria's reign the question was brought to a test. A Radical member of the House of Commons moved as an amendment to the address a resolution declaring in favour

of the ballot and of shorter duration of Parliaments. Only twenty members voted for it; and Lord John Russell declared distinctly against all such attempts to reopen the Reform question. It was impossible that this declaration should not be received with disappointment and anger by great masses of the people. They had been in the full assurance that the Reform Bill itself was only the means by which greater changes were to be brought about. Lord John Russell said in the House of Commons that to push Reform any farther then would be a breach of faith towards those who helped him to carry it. A great many outside Parliament not unnaturally regarded the refusal to go any farther as a breach of faith towards them on the part of the Liberal leaders. Lord John Russell was right from his point of view. It would have been impossible to carry the Reform movement any farther just then. In a country like ours where interests are so nicely balanced, it must always happen that a forward movement in politics is followed by a certain reaction. The parliamentary leaders in Parliament were already beginning to feel the influence of this law of our political growth. It would have been hopeless to attempt to get the upper and middle classes at such a time to consent to any further changes of considerable importance. But the feeling of those who had helped so materially to bring about the Reform movement was at least intelligible when they found that its effects were to stop just short of the measures which alone could have any direct influence on their political position.

A conference was held almost immediately between a few of the Liberal members of Parliament who professed Radical opinions and some of the leaders of the working men. At this conference the programme, or what was always afterwards known as 'the Charter,' was agreed upon and drawn up. The name of 'Charter' appears to have been given to it for the first time by O'Connell. 'There's your Charter,' he said to the secretary of the Working Men's Association; 'agitate for it, and never be content with anything less.' It is a great thing accomplished in political agitation to have found a telling name. A name is almost as important for a new agitation as for a new novel. The title of 'The People's Charter' would of itself have launched the movement.

Quietly studied now, the People's Charter does not seem a very formidable document. There is little smell of gunpowder about it. Its 'points,' as they were called, were six. Manhood Suffrage came first. It was then called universal suffrage, but it only meant manhood suffrage, for the promoters of the movement had not the slightest idea of insisting on the franchise for women. The second was Annual Parliaments. Vote by Ballot was the third. Abolition of the Property Qualification (then and for many years after required for the election of a member to Parlia-

ment) was the fourth. The Payment of Members was the fifth; and the Division of the Country into Equal Electoral Districts, the sixth of the famous points. Of these proposals some, it will be seen, were perfectly reasonable. Not one was so absolutely unreasonable as to be outside the range of fair and quiet discussion among practical politicians. Three of the points—half, that is to say, of the whole number—have already been made part of our constitutional system. The existing franchise may be virtually regarded as manhood suffrage. We have for years been voting by means of a written paper dropped in a ballot-box. The property qualification for members of Parliament could hardly be said to have been abolished. Such a word seems far too grand and dignified to describe the fate that befell it. We should rather say that it was extinguished by its own absurdity and viciousness. It never kept out of Parliament any person legally disqualified, and it was the occasion of incessant tricks and devices which would surely have been counted disreputable and disgraceful to those who engaged in them, but that the injustice and folly of the system generated a sort of false public conscience where it was concerned, and made people think it as lawful to cheat it, as at one time the most respectable persons in private life thought it allowable to cheat the revenue and wear smuggled lace or drink smuggled brandy. The proposal to divide the country into equal electoral districts is one which can hardly yet be regarded as having come to any test. But it is almost certain that sooner or later some alteration of our present system in that direction will be adopted. Of the two other points of the Charter, the payment of members may be regarded as decidedly objectionable; and that for yearly parliaments as embodying a proposition which would make public life an almost insufferable nuisance to those actively concerned in it. But neither of these two proposals would be looked upon in our time as outside the range of legitimate political discussion. Indeed, the difficulty anyone engaged in their advocacy would find just now would be in getting any considerable body of listeners to take the slightest interest in the argument either for or against them.

The Chartists might be roughly divided into three classes—the political Chartists, the social Chartists, and the Chartists of vague discontent who joined the movement because they were wretched and felt angry. The first were the regular political agitators who wanted a wider popular representation; the second were chiefly led to the movement by their hatred of the 'bread-tax.' These two classes were perfectly clear as to what they wanted: some of their demands were just and reasonable; none of them were without the sphere of rational and peaceful controversy. The disciples of mere discontent naturally swerved alternately to the side of those

leaders or sections who talked loudest and fiercest against the law makers and the constituted authorities. Chartism soon split itself into two general divisions—the moral force and the physical force Chartism. Nothing can be more unjust than to represent the leaders and promoters of the movement as mere factious and self-seeking demagogues. Some of them were men of great ability and eloquence; some were impassioned young poets drawn from the class whom Kingsley has described in his 'Alton Locke;' some were men of education; many were earnest and devoted fanatics; and, so far as we can judge, all, or nearly all, were sincere. Even the man who did the movement most harm, and who made himself most odious to all reasonable outsiders, the once famous, now forgotten, Feargus O'Connor, appears to have been sincere and to have personally lost more than he gained by his Chartism. Four or five years after the collapse of what may be called the active Chartist agitation, a huge white-headed vacuous-eyed man was to be seen of mornings wandering through the arcades of Covent Garden Market, looking at the fruits and flowers, occasionally taking up a flower, smelling at it, and putting it down with a smile of infantile satisfaction; a man who might have reminded observers of Mr. Dick in Dickens's 'David Copperfield;' and this was the once renowned, once dreaded and detested Feargus O'Connor. For some time before his death his reason had wholly deserted him. Men did not know at first in the House of Commons the meaning of the odd pranks which Feargus was beginning to play there to the bewilderment of the great assembly. At last it was seen that the fallen leader of Chartism was a hopeless madman. It is hardly to be doubted that insanity had long been growing on him, and that some at least of his political follies and extravagances were the result of an increasing disorder of the brain. In his day he had been the very model for a certain class of demagogue. He was of commanding presence, great stature, and almost gigantic strength. He had education; he had mixed in good society; he belonged to an old family, and indeed boasted his descent from a line of Irish kings, not without some ground for the claim. He had been a man of some fashion at one time and had led a life of wild dissipation in his early years. He had a kind of eloquence which told with immense power on a mass of half-ignorant hearers; and indeed men who had no manner of liking for him or sympathy with his doctrines have declared that he was the most effective mob orator they had ever heard. He was ready, if needs were, to fight his way single-handed through a whole mass of Tory opponents at a contested election. Thomas Cooper, the venerable poet of Chartism, has given an amusing description, in his Autobiography, of Feargus O'Connor, who was then his hero, leaping from a waggon at a Nottingham election into the midst of a crowd of Tory

butchers, and with only two stout Chartist followers fighting his way through all opposition, 'flooring the butchers like ninepins.' 'Once,' says Mr. Cooper, 'the Tory lambs fought off all who surrounded him and got him down, and my heart quaked—for I thought they would kill him. But in a very few moments his red head emerged again from the rough human billows, and he was fighting his way as before.'

There were many men in the movement of a nobler moral nature than poor huge wild Feargus O'Connor. There were men like Thomas Cooper himself, devoted, impassioned, full of poetic aspiration and no scant measure of poetic inspiration as well. Henry Vincent was a man of unimpeachable character and of some ability, an effective popular speaker, who has since maintained in a very unpretending way a considerable reputation. Ernest Jones was as sincere and self-sacrificing a man as ever joined a sinking cause. He had proved his sincerity more in deed than word. His talents only fell short of that height which might claim to be regarded as genius. His education was that of a scholar and a gentleman. Many men of education and ability were drawn into sympathy if not into actual co-operation with the Chartists by a conviction that some of their claims were well-founded, and that the grievances of the working classes, which were terrible to contemplate, were such as a Parliament better representing all classes would be able to remedy. Some of these men have since made for themselves an honourable name in Parliament and out of it; some of them have risen to high political position. It is necessary to read such a book as Thomas Cooper's Autobiography to understand how genuine was the poetic and political enthusiasm which was at the heart of the Chartist movement, and how bitter was the suffering which drove into its ranks so many thousands of stout working men who, in a country like England, might well have expected to be able to live by the hard work they were only too willing to do. One must read the Anti-Corn-Law Rhymes of Ebenezer Elliott to understand how the 'bread tax' became indentified in the minds of the very best of the working class, and identified justly, with the system of political and economical legislation which was undoubtedly kept up, although not of conscious purpose, for the benefit of a class. In the minds of too many, the British Constitution meant hard work and half-starvation.

A whole literature of Chartist newspapers sprang up to advocate the cause. The *Northern Star*, owned and conducted by Feargus O'Connor, was the most popular and influential of them; but every great town had its Chartist press. Meetings were held at which sometimes very violent language was employed. It began to be the practice to hold torchlight meetings at night, and many men went armed to these, and open clamour

was made by the wilder of the Chartists for an appeal to arms. A formidable riot took place in Birmingham, where the authorities endeavoured to put down a Chartist meeting. Ebenezer Elliott and other sensible sympathisers endeavoured to open the eyes of the more extreme Chartists to the folly of all schemes for measures of violence; but for the time the more violent a speaker was, the better chance he had of becoming popular. Efforts were made at times to bring about a compromise with the middle-class Liberals and the Anti-Corn-Law leaders; but all such attempts proved failures. The Chartists would not give up their Charter; many of them would not renounce the hope of seeing it carried by force. The Government began to prosecute some of the orators and leaders of the Charter movement; and some of these were convicted, imprisoned, and treated with great severity. Henry Vincent's imprisonment at Newport, in Wales, was the occasion of an attempt at rescue which bore a very close resemblance indeed to a scheme of organised and armed rebellion.

Newport had around it a large mining population, and the miners were nearly all physical force Chartists. It was arranged among them to march in three divisions to a certain rendezvous, and when they had formed a junction there, which was to be two hours after midnight, to march into Newport, attack the gaol, and effect the release of Vincent and other prisoners. The attempt was to be under the chief command of Mr. Frost, a trader of Newport, who had been a magistrate, but was deprived of the commission of the peace for violent political speeches—a man of respectable character and conduct up to that time. This was on November 4, 1839. There was some misunderstanding and delay, as almost invariably happens in such enterprises, and the divisions of the little army did not effect their junction in time. When they entered Newport, they found the authorities fully prepared to meet them. Frost entered the town at the head of one division only, another following him at some interval. The third was nowhere, as far as the object of the enterprise was concerned. A conflict took place between the rioters and the soldiery and police, and the rioters were dispersed with a loss of some ten killed and fifty wounded. In their flight they encountered some of the other divisions coming up to the enterprise all too late. Nothing was more remarkable than the courage shown by the mayor of Newport, the magistrates, and the little body of soldiers. The mayor, Mr. Phillips, received two gunshot wounds. Frost was arrested next day along with some of his colleagues. They were tried on June 6, 1840. The charge against them was one of high treason. There did really appear ground enough to suppose that the expedition led by Frost was not merely to rescue Vincent, but to set going the great rebellious movement of which the physical force Chartists had long been talking.

The Chartists appear at first to have numbered some ten thousand—twenty thousand indeed, according to other accounts—and they were armed with guns, pikes, swords, pickaxes and bludgeons. If the delay and misunderstanding had not taken place, and they had arrived at their rendezvous at the appointed time, the attempt might have led to very calamitous results. The jury found Frost and two of his companions, Williams and Jones, guilty of high treason, and they were sentenced to death; the sentence, however, was commuted to one of transportation for life. Even this was afterwards relaxed, and when some years had passed away, and Chartism had ceased to be a disturbing influence, Frost was allowed to return to England, where he found that a new generation had grown up, and that he was all but forgotten. In the meantime the Corn-Law agitation had been successful; the year of revolutions had passed harmlessly over; Feargus O'Connor's day was done.

But the trial and conviction of Frost, Williams, and Jones did not put a stop to the Chartist agitation. On the contrary, that agitation seemed rather to wax and strengthen and grow broader because of the attempt at Newport, and its consequences. Thomas Cooper, for example, had never attended a Chartist meeting, nor known anything of Chartism beyond what he read in the newspapers, until after the conviction of Frost and his companions. There was no lack of what were called energetic measures on the part of the Government. The leading Chartists all over the country were prosecuted and tried, literally by hundreds. In most cases they were convicted and sentenced to terms of imprisonment. The imprisonment served rather to make the Chartist leaders popular, and to advertise the movement, than to accomplish any purpose the Government had at heart. They helped to make the Government very unpopular. The working classes grew more and more bitter against the Whigs, who they said had professed Liberalism only to gain their own ends, and were really at heart less Liberal than the Tories. Now and then an imprisoned representative of the Chartist movement got to the end of his period of sentence, and came out of durance. He was a hero all over again, and his return to public life was the signal for fresh demonstrations of Chartism. At the general election of 1841, the vast majority of the Chartists, acting on the advice of some of their more extreme leaders, threw all their support into the cause of the Tories, and so helped the downfall of the Melbourne Administration.

Wide and almost universal discontent among the working classes in town and country still helped to swell the Chartist ranks. The weavers and stockingers in some of the manufacturing towns were miserably poor. Wages were low everywhere. In the agricultural districts the complaints

against the operation of the new Poor Law were vehement and passionate; and although they were unjust in principle and sustained by monstrous exaggerations of statement, they were not the less potent as recruiting agents for Chartism. There was a profound distrust of the middle class and their leaders. The Anti-Corn-Law agitation which was then springing up, and which, one might have thought, must find its most strenuous support among the poor artisans of the towns, was regarded with deep disgust by some of the Chartists, and with downright hostility by others. A very temperate orator of the Chartists put the feeling of himself and his fellows in clear terms. 'We do not object to the repeal of the Corn Laws,' he said; 'on the contrary. When we get the Charter we will repeal the Corn Laws and all the bad laws. But if you give up your agitation for the Charter to help the Free Traders, they will never help you to get the Charter. Don't be deceived by the middle classes again! You helped them to get the Reform Bill, and where are the fine promises they made you? Don't listen to their humbug any more. Stick to your Charter. Without your votes you are veritable slaves.' The Chartists believed themselves abandoned by their natural leaders. All manner of socialist doctrines began to creep in among them. Wild and infidel opinions were proclaimed by many. Thomas Cooper tells one little anecdote which he says fairly illustrates the feeling of many of the fiercer spirits among the artisan Chartists in some of the towns. He and his friends were holding a meeting one day in Leicester. A poor religious stockinger said: 'Let us be patient a little longer; surely God Almighty will help us soon.' 'Talk to us no more about thy Goddle Mighty,' was the fierce cry that came in reply from one of the audience; 'there isn't one! If there was one, he wouldn't let us suffer as we do!' About the same time a poor stockinger rushed into Cooper's house, and throwing himself wildly on a chair, exclaimed, 'I wish they would hang me. I have lived on cold potatoes that were given me these two days, and this morning I've eaten a raw potato for sheer hunger. Give me a bit of bread and a cup of coffee or I shall drop.' Thomas Cooper's remark about this time is very intelligible and simple. It tells a long clear story about Chartism. 'How fierce,' he says, 'my discourses became now in the Market Place on Sunday evenings! My heart often burned with indignation I knew not how to express. I began from sheer sympathy to feel a tendency to glide into the depraved thinking of some of the stronger but coarser spirits among the men.'

So the agitation went on. We need not follow it through all its incidents. It took in some places the form of industrial strikes; in others, of socialistic assemblages. Its fanaticism had in many instances a strong

flavour of nobleness and virtue. Some men under the influence of thoughtful leaders pledged themselves to total abstinence from intoxicating drinks, in the full belief that the agitation would never succeed until the working classes had proved themselves by their self-control to be worthy of the gift of freedom. In other instances, as has been already remarked, the disappointment and despair of the people took the form of infidelity. There were many riots and disturbances; none, indeed, of so seemingly rebellious a nature as that of Frost and his companions, but many serious enough to spread great alarm and to furnish fresh occasion for Government prosecutions and imprisonments. Some of the prisoners seem to have been really treated with a positively wanton harshness and even cruelty. Thomas Cooper's account of his own sufferings in prison is painful to read. It is not easy to understand what good purpose any Government could have supposed the prison authorities were serving by the unnecessary degradation and privation of men who, whatever their errors, were conspicuously and transparently sincere and honest.

It is clear that at that time the Chartists, who represented the bulk of the artisan class in most of the large towns, did in their very hearts believe that England was ruled for the benefit of aristocrats and millionaires who were absolutely indifferent to the sufferings of the poor. It is equally clear that most of what are called the ruling class did really believe the English working men who joined the Chartist movement to be a race of fierce unmanageable and selfish communists who, if they were allowed their own way for a moment, would prove themselves determined to overthrow throne, altar, and all established securities of society. An ignorant panic prevailed on both sides. England was indeed divided then, as Mr. Disraeli's novel described it, into two nations, the rich and the poor, in towns at least; and each hated and feared the other with all that unthinking hate and fear which hostile nations are capable of showing even amid all the influences of civilisation.

## CHAPTER VI.

### QUESTION DE JUPONS.

MEANWHILE things were looking ill with the Melbourne Ministry. Sir Robert Peel was addressing great meetings of his followers, and declaring with much show of justice that he had created anew the Conservative party. The position of the Whigs would in any case have been difficult. Their mandate, to use the French phrase, seemed to be exhausted. They

had no new thing to propose. They came into power as reformers, and now they had nothing to offer in the way of reform. It may be taken as a certainty that in English politics reaction must always follow advance. The Whigs must just then have come in for the effects of reaction. But they had more than that to contend with. In our own time, Mr. Gladstone had no sooner passed his great measures of reform than he began to experience the effects of reaction. But there was a great difference between his situation and that of the Whigs under Melbourne. He had not failed to satisfy the demands of his followers. He had no extreme wing of his party clamouring against him on the ground that he had made use of their strength to help him in carrying out as much of his programme as suited his own *coterie*, and that he had then deserted them. This was the condition of the Whigs. The more advanced Liberals and the whole body of the Chartists, and the working classes generally, detested and denounced them. Many of the Liberals had had some hope while Lord Durham still seemed likely to be a political power, but with the fading of his influence they lost all interest in the Whig Ministry. On the other hand the support of O'Connell was a serious disadvantage to Melbourne and his party in England.

But the Whig ministers were always adding by some mistake or other to the difficulties of their position. The Jamaica Bill put them in great perplexity. This was a measure brought in on April 9, 1839, to make temporary provision for the government of the island of Jamaica, by setting aside the House of Assembly for five years, and during that time empowering the governor and council with three salaried commissioners to manage the affairs of the colony. In other words, the Melbourne Ministry proposed to suspend for five years the constitution of Jamaica. No body of persons can be more awkwardly placed than a Whig Ministry proposing to set aside a constitutional government anywhere. Such a proposal may be a necessary measure; it may be unavoidable; but it always comes with a bad grace from Whigs or Liberals, and gives their enemies a handle against them which they cannot fail to use to some purpose. What, indeed, it may be plausibly asked, is the *raison d'être* of a Liberal Government if they have to return to the old Tory policy of suspended constitutions and absolute law? When Rabagas, become minister, tells his master that the only way to silence discontent is by the liberal use of the cannon, the Prince of Monaco remarks very naturally, that if that was to be the policy, he might as well have kept to his old ministers and his absolutism. So it is with an English Liberal Ministry advising the suspension of constitutions.

In the case of the Jamaica Bill there was some excuse for the harsh

policy. After the abolition of slavery, the former masters in the island found it very hard to reconcile themselves to the new condition of things. They could not all at once understand that their former slaves were to be their equals before the law. As we have seen much more lately in the Southern States of America after the civil war and the emancipation of the negroes, there was still a pertinacious attempt made by the planter class to regain in substance the power they had had to renounce in name. This was not to be justified or excused; but as human nature is made it was not unnatural. On the other hand, some of the Jamaica negroes were too ignorant to understand that they had acquired any rights; others were a little too clamorous in their assertion. Many a planter worked his men and whipped his women just as before the emancipation, and the victims did not understand that they had any right to complain. Many negroes, again, were ignorantly and thoughtlessly 'bumptious,' to use a vulgar expression, in the assertion of their newly-found equality. The Imperial governors and officials were generally and justly eager to protect the negroes; and the result was a constant quarrel between the Jamaica House of Assembly and the representatives of the home Government. The Assembly became more insolent and offensive every day. A bill, very necessary in itself, was passed by the Imperial Parliament for the better regulation of prisons in Jamaica, and the House of Assembly refused to submit to any such legislation. Under these circumstances the Melbourne Ministry proposed the suspension of the constitution of the island. The measure was opposed, not only by Peel and the Conservatives, but by many Radicals. It was argued that there were many courses open to the Ministry short of the high-handed proceeding they proposed; and in truth there was not that confidence in the Melbourne Ministry at all which would have enabled them to obtain from Parliament a majority sufficient to carry through such a policy. The Ministry was weak and discredited; anybody might now throw a stone at it. They only had a majority of five in favour of their measure. This, of course, was a virtual defeat. The Ministry acknowledged it and resigned. Their defeat was a humiliation; their resignation an inevitable submission; but they came back to office almost immediately under conditions that made the humiliation more humbling, and rendered their subsequent career more difficult by far than their past struggle for existence had been.

The return of the Whigs to office—for they cannot be said to have returned to power—came about in a very odd way. Gulliver ought to have had an opportunity of telling such a story to the king of the Brobdingnagians, in order the better to impress him with a clear idea of the logical beauty of constitutional government. It was an entirely new illus-

tration of the old *cherchez la femme* principle, the *femme* in this case, however, being altogether a passive and innocent cause of trouble. The famous controversy known as the 'Bedchamber Question' made a way back for the Whigs into place. When Lord Melbourne resigned, the Queen sent for the Duke of Wellington, who advised her to apply to Sir Robert Peel, for the reason that the chief difficulties of a Conservative Government would be in the House of Commons. The Queen sent for Peel, and when he came, told him with a simple and girlish frankness that she was sorry to have to part with her late ministers, of whose conduct she entirely approved, but that she bowed to constitutional usage. This must have been rather an astonishing beginning to the grave and formal Peel; but he was not a man to think any worse of the candid young Sovereign for her outspoken ways. The negotiations went on very smoothly as to the colleagues Peel meant to recommend to her Majesty, until he happened to notice the composition of the royal household as regarded the ladies most closely in attendance on the Queen. For example, he found that the wife of Lord Normanby and the sister of Lord Morpeth were the two ladies in closest attendance on her Majesty. Now it has to be borne in mind—it was proclaimed again and again during the negotiations—that the chief difficulty of the Conservatives would necessarily be in Ireland, where their policy would be altogether opposed to that of the Whigs. Lord Normanby had been Lord Lieutenant of Ireland under the Whigs, and Lord Morpeth, whom we can all remember as the amiable and accomplished Lord Carlisle of later time, Irish Secretary. It certainly could not be satisfactory for Peel to try to work a new Irish policy while the closest household companions of the Queen were the wife and sister of the displaced statesmen who directly represented the policy he had to supersede. Had this point of view been made clear to the Sovereign at first, it is hardly possible that any serious difficulty could have arisen. The Queen must have seen the obvious reasonableness of Peel's request; nor is it to be supposed that the two ladies in question could have desired to hold their places under such circumstances. But unluckily some misunderstanding took place at the very beginning of the conversations on this point. Peel only desired to press for the retirement of the ladies holding the higher offices; he did not intend to ask for any change affecting a place lower in official rank than that of lady of the bedchamber. But somehow or other he conveyed to the mind of the Queen a different idea. She thought he meant to insist, as a matter of principle, upon the removal of all her familiar attendants and household associates. Under this impression she consulted Lord John Russell, who advised her on what he understood to be the state of the facts. On his advice the Queen stated in reply that she could not 'con-

sent to a course which she conceives to be contrary to usage and is repugnant to her feelings.' Sir Robert Peel held firm to his stipulation; and the chance of his then forming a Ministry was at an end. Lord Melbourne and his colleagues had to be recalled; and at a Cabinet meeting they adopted a minute declaring it reasonable 'that the great offices of the Court and situations in the household held by members of Parliament should be included in the political arrangements made on a change in the Administration; but they are not of opinion that a similar principle should be applied or extended to the offices held by ladies in her Majesty's household.'

The matter was naturally made the subject of explanation in both Houses of Parliament. Sir Robert Peel was undoubtedly right in his view of the question, and if he had been clearly understood the right could hardly have been disputed; but he defended his position in language of what now seems rather ludicrous exaggeration. He treated this *question de jupons* as if it were of the last importance not alone to the honour of the Ministry, but even to the safety of the realm. 'I ask you,' he said, 'to go back to other times: take Pitt or Fox, or any other minister of this proud country, and answer for yourselves the question, is it fitting that one man shall be the minister, responsible for the most arduous charge that can fall to the lot of man, and that the wife of the other—that other his most formidable political enemy—shall, with his express consent, hold office in immediate attendance on the Sovereign?' 'Oh, no!' he exclaimed, in an outburst of indignant eloquence. 'I felt that it was impossible; I could not consent to this. Feelings more powerful than reasoning told me that it was not for my own honour or for the public interests that I should consent to be Minister of England.' This high-flown language seems oddly out of place on the lips of a statesman who of all his contemporaries was the least apt to indulge in bursts of overwrought sentiment. Lord Melbourne, on the other hand, defended his action in the House of Lords in language of equal exaggeration. 'I resume office,' he said, 'unequivocally and solely for this reason, that I will not desert my Sovereign in a situation of difficulty and distress, especially when a demand is made upon her Majesty with which I think she ought not to comply; a demand inconsistent with her personal honour, and which, if acquiesced in, would render her reign liable to all the changes and variations of political parties, and make her domestic life one constant scene of unhappiness and discomfort.'

In the country the incident created great excitement. Some Liberals bluntly insisted that it was not right in such a matter to consult the feelings of the Sovereign at all, and that the advice of the minister, and his

idea of what was for the good of the country, ought alone to be considered. On the other hand, O'Connell burst into impassioned language of praise and delight, as he dwelt upon the decision of the Queen, and called upon the Powers above to bless 'the young creature—that creature of only nineteen, as pure as she is exalted,' who consulted not her head but 'the overflowing feelings of her young heart.' 'Those excellent women who had been so long attached to her, who had nursed and tended to her wants in her childhood, who had watched over her in her sickness, whose eyes beamed with delight as they saw her increasing daily in beauty and in loveliness—when they were threatened to be forced away from her—her heart told her that she could as well part with that heart itself as with those whom it held so dear.' Feargus O'Connor went a good deal further, however, when he boldly declared that he had excellent authority for the statement, that if the Tories had got the young Queen into their hands by the agency of the new ladies of the bedchamber, they had a plan for putting her out of the way and placing 'the bloody Cumberland' on the throne in her stead. In O'Connell's case, no mystery was made of the fact that he believed the ladies actually surrounding the young Queen to be friendly to what he considered the cause of Ireland; and that he was satisfied that Peel and the Tories were against it. For the wild talk represented by the words of Feargus O'Connor, it is only necessary to say that, frenzied and foolish as it must seem now to us, and as it must even then have seemed to all rational beings, it had the firm acceptance of large masses of people throughout the country, who persisted in seeing in Peel's pleadings for the change of the bedchamber women the positive evidence of an unscrupulous Tory plot to get possession of the Queen's person, not indeed for the purpose of violently altering the succession, but in the hope of poisoning her mind against all Liberal opinions.

Lord Brougham was not likely to lose so good an opportunity of attacking Lord Melbourne and his colleagues. He insisted that Lord Melbourne had sacrificed Liberal principles and the interests of the country to the private feelings of the Sovereign. 'I thought,' he declared in a burst of eloquent passion, 'that we belonged to a country in which the government by the Crown and the wisdom of Parliament was everything, and the personal feelings of the Sovereign were absolutely not to be named at the same time. . . . I little thought to have lived to hear it said by the Whigs of 1839, "Let us rally round the Queen; never mind the House of Commons; never mind measures; throw principles to the dogs; leave pledges unredeemed; but for God's sake rally round the throne." Little did I think the day would come when I should hear such language, not from the unconstitutional, place-hunting, king-loving Tories, who thought

the public was made for the king, not the king for the public, but from the Whigs themselves! The Jamaica Bill, said to be a most important measure, had been brought forward. The Government staked their existence upon it. They were not able to carry it; they therefore conceived they had lost the confidence of the House of Commons. They thought it a measure of paramount necessity then. Is it less necessary now? Oh, but that is altered! The Jamaica question is to be new fashioned; principles are to be given up, and all because of two ladies of the bedchamber.'

Nothing could be more undesirable than the position in which Lord Melbourne and his colleagues had allowed the Sovereign to place herself. The more people in general came to think over the matter, the more clearly it was seen that Peel was in the right, although he had not made himself understood at first, and had, perhaps, not shown all through enough of consideration for the novelty of the young Sovereign's position, or for the difficulty of finding a conclusive precedent on such a question, seeing that since the principle of ministerial responsibility had come to be recognised among us in its genuine sense, there never before had been a woman on the throne. But no one could deliberately maintain the position at first taken up by the Whigs; and in point of fact they were soon glad to drop it as quickly and quietly as possible. The whole question, it may be said at once, was afterwards settled by a sensible compromise which the Prince Consort suggested. It was agreed that on a change of Ministry the Queen would listen to any representation from the incoming Prime Minister as to the composition of her household, and would arrange for the retirement 'of their own accord' of any ladies who were so closely related to the leaders of Opposition as to render their presence inconvenient. The Whigs came back to office utterly discredited. They had to tinker up somehow a new Jamaica Bill. They had declared that they could not remain in office unless they were allowed to deal in a certain way with Jamaica; and now that they were back again in office, they could not avoid trying to do something with the Jamaica business. They therefore introduced a new bill which was a mere compromise put together in the hope of its being allowed to pass. It was allowed to pass, after a fashion; that is, when the Opposition in the House of Lords had tinkered it and amended it at their pleasure. The bedchamber question in fact had thrown Jamaica out of perspective. The unfortunate island must do the best it could now; in this country statesmen had graver matter to think of. Sir Robert Peel could not govern with Lady Normanby; the Whigs would not govern without her.

It does not seem by any means clear, however, that Lord Melbourne

and his colleagues deserved the savage censure of Lord Brougham merely for having returned to office and given up their original position with regard to the Jamaica Bill. What else remained to be done? If they had refused to come back, the only result would have been that Peel must have become Prime Minister, with a distinct minority in the House of Commons. Peel could not have held his ground there, except by the favour and mercy of his opponents; and those were not merciful days in politics. He would only have taken office to be called upon at once to resign it by some adverse vote of the House of Commons. The state of things seems in this respect to be not unlike that which existed when Mr. Gladstone was defeated on the Irish University Bill in 1873. Mr. Gladstone resigned; or rather tendered his resignation; and by his advice her Majesty invited Mr. Disraeli to form a Cabinet. Mr. Disraeli did not see his way to undertake the government of the country with the existing House of Commons; and as the conditions under which he was willing to undertake the duty were not conveniently attainable, the negotiation came to an end. The Queen sent again for Mr. Gladstone, who consented to resume his place as Prime Minister. If Lord Melbourne returned to office with the knowledge that he could not carry the Jamaica Bill which he had declared to be necessary, Mr. Gladstone resumed his place at the head of his Ministry without the remotest hope of being able to carry his Irish University measure. No one ever found fault with Mr. Gladstone for having, under the circumstances, done the best he could, and consented to meet the request of the Sovereign and the convenience of the public service by again taking on himself the responsibility of government, although the measure on which he had declared he would stake the existence of his Ministry had been rejected by the House of Commons.

Still it cannot be denied that the Melbourne Government were prejudiced in the public mind by these events, and by the attacks for which they gave so large an opportunity. The feeling in some parts of the country was still sentimentally with the Queen. At many a dinner table it became the fashion to drink the health of her Majesty with a punning addition, not belonging to an order of wit any higher than that which in other days toasted the King 'over the water;' or prayed of heaven to 'send this crumb well down.' The Queen was toasted as the sovereign of spirit who 'would not let her belles be peeled.' But the Ministry were almost universally believed to have placed themselves in a ridiculous light, and to have crept again into office, as Mr. Molesworth puts it in his valuable 'History of England from 1830 to 1874,' 'behind the petticoats of the ladies in waiting.' The death of Lady Flora Hastings, which occurred almost immediately, tended further to arouse a feeling of dislike to

the Whigs. This melancholy event does not need any lengthened comment. A young lady who belonged to the household of the Duchess of Kent fell under an unfounded, but in the circumstances not wholly unreasonable, suspicion. It was the classic story of Calisto, Diana's unhappy nymph, reversed. Lady Flora was proved to be innocent; but her death, imminent probably in any case from the disease which had fastened on her, was doubtless hastened by the humiliation to which she had been subjected. It does not seem that anyone was to blame in the matter. The Ministry certainly do not appear to have done anything for which they could fairly be reproached. No one can be surprised that those who surrounded the Queen and the Duchess of Kent should have taken some pains to inquire into the truth or falsehood of scandalous rumours, for which there might have appeared to be some obvious justification. But the whole story was so sad and shocking; the death of the poor young lady followed with such tragic rapidity upon the establishment of her innocence; the natural complaints of her mother were so loud and impassioned, that the ministers who had to answer the mother's appeals were unavoidably placed in an invidious and a painful position. The demands of the Marchioness of Hastings for redress were unreasonable. They endeavoured to make out the existence of a cruel conspiracy against Lady Flora, and called for the peremptory dismissal and disgrace of the eminent court physician, who had merely performed a most painful duty, and whose report had been the especial means of establishing the injustice of the suspicions which were directed against her. But it was a damaging duty for a minister to have to write to the distracted mother, as Lord Melbourne found it necessary to do, telling her that her demand was 'so unprecedented and objectionable, that even the respect due to your ladyship's sex, rank, family and character would not justify me in more, if indeed it authorises so much, than acknowledging that letter for the sole purpose of acquainting your ladyship that I have received it.' The 'Palace scandal,' as it was called, became known shortly before the dispute about the ladies of the bedchamber. The death of Lady Flora Hastings happened soon after it. It is not strictly in logical propriety that such events, or their rapid succession, should tend to bring into disrepute the Ministry who can only be regarded as their historical contemporaries. But the world must change a great deal before ministers are no longer held accountable in public opinion for anything but the events over which they can be shown to have some control.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE QUEEN'S MARRIAGE.

On January 16, 1840, the Queen, opening Parliament in person, announced her intention to marry her cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha—a step which she trusted would be 'conducive to the interests of my people as well as to my own domestic happiness.' In the discussion which followed in the House of Commons, Sir Robert Peel observed that her Majesty had 'the singular good fortune to be able to gratify her private feelings, while she performs her public duty, and to obtain the best guarantee for happiness by contracting an alliance founded on affection.' Peel spoke the simple truth; it was indeed a marriage founded on affection. No marriage contracted in the humblest class could have been more entirely a union of love, and more free from what might be called selfish and worldly considerations. The Queen had for a long time loved her cousin. He was nearly her own age, the Queen being the elder by three months and two or three days. Francis Charles Augustus Albert Emmanuel was the full name of the young Prince. He was the second son of Ernest, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, and of his wife Louisa, daughter of Augustus Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg. Prince Albert was born at the Rosenau, one of his father's residences, near Coburg, on August 26, 1819. The Court historian notices with pardonable complacency the 'remarkable coincidence'—easily explained, surely—that the same *accoucheuse*, Madame Siebold, assisted at the birth of Prince Albert, and of the Queen some three months before, and that the Prince was baptised by the clergyman, Professor Genzler, who had the year before officiated at the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of Kent. A marriage between the Princess Victoria and Prince Albert had been thought of as desirable among the families on both sides, but it was always wisely resolved that nothing should be said to the young Princess on the subject unless she herself showed a distinct liking for her cousin. In 1836, Prince Albert was brought by his father to England, and made the personal acquaintance of the Princess, and she seems at once to have been drawn towards him in the manner which her family and friends would most have desired. Three years later the Prince again came to England, and the Queen, in a letter to her uncle, the King of the Belgians, wrote of him in the warmest terms. 'Albert's beauty,' she said, 'is most striking, and he is most amiable and unaffected—in short, very fascinating.' Not many days after she wrote to another friend and faithful counsellor, the

Baron Stockmar, to say, 'I do feel so guilty I know not how to begin my letter; but I think the news it will contain will be sufficient to ensure your forgiveness. Albert has completely won my heart, and all was settled between us this morning.' The Queen had just before informed Lord Melbourne of her intention, and Lord Melbourne, it is needless to say, expressed his decided approval. There was no one to disapprove of such a marriage.

Prince Albert was a young man to win the heart of any girl. He was singularly handsome, graceful and gifted. In princes, as we know, a small measure of beauty and accomplishment suffices to throw courtiers and court ladies into transports of admiration; but had Prince Albert been the son of a farmer or a butler, he must have been admired for his singular personal attractions. He had had a sound and a varied education. He had been brought up as if he were to be a professional musician, a professional chemist or botanist, and a professor of history and belles lettres and the fine arts. The scientific and the literary were remarkably blended in his bringing-up; remarkably, that is to say, for some half-century ago, when even in Germany a system of education seldom aimed at being *totus, teres atque rotundus*. He had begun to study the constitutional history of States, and was preparing himself to take an interest in politics. There was much of the practical and business-like about him, as he showed in after-life; he loved farming and took a deep interest in machinery and in the growth of industrial science. He was a sort of combination of the troubadour, the *savant*, and the man of business. His tastes were for a quiet, domestic and unostentatious life—a life of refined culture, of happy calm evenings, of art and poetry and genial communion with Nature. He was made happy by the songs of birds, and delighted in sitting alone and playing the organ. But there was in him too a great deal of the political philosopher. He loved to hear political and other questions well argued out, and once observed that a false argument jarred on his nerves as much as a false note in music. He seems to have had from his youth an all-pervading sense of duty. So far as we can guess, he was almost absolutely free from the ordinary follies, not to say sins, of youth. Young as he was when he married the Queen, he devoted himself at once to what he conscientiously believed to be the duties of his station with a self-control and self devotion rare even among the aged, and almost unknown in youth. He gave up every habit, however familiar and dear, every predilection no matter how sweet, every indulgence of sentiment or amusement, that in any way threatened to interfere with the steadfast performance of the part he had assigned to himself. No man ever devoted himself more faithfully to the difficult duties of a high and a new situation, or kept

more strictly to his resolve. It was no task to him to be a tender husband and a loving father. This was a part of his sweet, pure and affectionate nature. It may well be doubted whether any other queen ever had a married life so happy as that of Queen Victoria.

The marriage of the Queen and the Prince took place on February 10, 1840. The reception given by the people in general to the Prince on his landing in England a few days before the ceremony, and on the day of the marriage, was cordial and even enthusiastic. But it is not certain whether there was a very cordial feeling to the Prince among all classes of politicians. A rumour of the most absurd kind had got abroad in certain circles that the young Albert was not a Protestant—that he was in fact a member of the Church of Rome. In a different circle the belief was curiously cherished that the Prince was a free-thinker in matters of religion and a radical in politics. Somewhat unfortunately, the declaration of the intended marriage to the Privy Council did not mention the fact that Albert was a Protestant Prince. The Cabinet no doubt thought that the leaders of public opinion on all sides of politics would have had historical knowledge among them to teach them that Prince Albert belonged to that branch of the Saxon family which since the Reformation had been conspicuously Protestant. 'There has not,' Prince Albert himself wrote to the Queen on December 7, 1839, 'been a single Catholic princess introduced into the Coburg family since the appearance of Luther in 1521. Moreover the Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony was the very first Protestant that ever lived.' No doubt the Ministry thought also that the constitutional rule which forbids an English sovereign to marry with a Roman Catholic under penalty of forfeiting the crown, would be regarded as a sufficient guarantee that when they announced the Queen's approaching marriage it must be a marriage with a Protestant. All this assumption, however reasonable and natural, did not find warrant in the events that actually took place. It would have been better of course if the Government had assumed that Parliament and the public generally knew nothing about the Prince and his ancestry, or the constitutional penalties for a member of the Royal Family marrying a Catholic, and had formally announced that the choice of Queen Victoria had happily fallen on a Protestant. The wise and foreseeing Leopold, King of the Belgians, had recommended that the fact should be specifically mentioned; but it was perhaps a part of Lord Melbourne's indolent good nature to take it for granted that people generally would be calm and reasonable, and that all would go right without interruption or cavil. He therefore acted on the assumption that any formal mention of Prince Albert's Protestantism would be superfluous; and neither in the declaration to the Privy Council,

nor in the announcement to Parliament, was a word said upon the subject. The result was that in the debate on the address in the House of Lords a somewhat unseemly altercation took place, an altercation the more to be regretted because it might have been so easily spared. The question was bluntly raised by no less a person than the Duke of Wellington whether the future husband of the Queen was or was not a Protestant. The Duke actually charged the Ministry with having purposely left out the word 'Protestant' in the announcements in order that they might not offend their Irish and Catholic supporters, and by the very charge did much to strengthen the popular feeling against the statesmen who were supposed to be kept in office by virtue of the patronage of O'Connell. The Duke moved that the word 'Protestant' be inserted in the congratulatory address to the Queen, and he carried his point, although Lord Melbourne held to the opinion that the word was unnecessary in describing a Prince who was not only a Protestant but descended from the most Protestant family in Europe. The lack of judgment and tact on the part of the Ministry was never more clearly shown than in the original omission of the word.

Another disagreeable occurrence was the discussion that took place when the bill for the naturalisation of the Prince was brought before the House of Lords. The bill in its title merely set out the proposal to provide for the naturalisation of the Prince; but it contained a clause to give him precedence for life 'next after her Majesty, in Parliament or elsewhere, as her Majesty might think proper.' A great deal of objection was raised by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Brougham to this clause on its own merits; but, as was natural, the objections were infinitely aggravated by the singular want of judgment, and even of common propriety, which could introduce a clause conferring on the Sovereign powers so large and so new into a mere naturalisation bill, without any previous notice to Parliament. The matter was ultimately settled by allowing the bill to remain a simple naturalisation measure, and leaving the question of precedence to be dealt with by Royal prerogative. Both the great political parties concurred without further difficulty in an arrangement by which it was provided in letters patent that the Prince should thenceforth upon all occasions, and in all meetings, except when otherwise provided by Act of Parliament, have precedence next to the Queen. There never would have been any difficulty in the matter if the Ministry had acted with any discretion; but it would be absurd to expect that a great nation, whose constitutional system is built up of precedents, should agree at once and without demur to every new arrangement which it might seem convenient to a Ministry to make in a hurry. Yet another source of dissatisfaction

to the palace and the people was created by the manner in which the Ministry took upon themselves to bring forward the proposition for the settlement of an annuity on the Prince. In former cases—that, for example, of Queen Charlotte, Queen Adelaide, and Prince Leopold on his marriage with the Princess Charlotte—the annuity granted had been 50,000*l.* It so happened, however, that the settlement to be made on Prince Albert came in times of great industrial and commercial distress. The days had gone by when economy in the House of Commons was looked upon as an ignoble principle, and when loyalty to the Sovereign was believed to bind members of Parliament to grant without a murmur of discussion any sums that might be asked by the Minister in the Sovereign's name. Parliament was beginning to feel more thoroughly its responsibility as the guardian of the nation's resources, and it was no longer thought a fine thing to give away the money of the taxpayer with magnanimous indifference. It was therefore absurd on the part of the Ministry to suppose that because great sums of money had been voted without question on former occasions, they would be voted without question now. It is quite possible that the whole matter might have been settled without controversy if the Ministry had shown any judgment whatever in their conduct of the business. In our day the Ministry would at once have consulted the leaders of the Opposition. In all matters where the grant of money to anyone connected with the Sovereign is concerned, it is now understood that the gift shall come with the full concurrence of both parties in Parliament. The leader of the House of Commons would probably, by arrangement, propose the grant, and the leader of the Opposition would second it. In the case of the annuity to Prince Albert, the Ministry had the almost incredible folly to bring forward their proposal without having invited in any way the concurrence of the Opposition. They introduced the proposal without discretion; they conducted the discussion on it without temper. They answered the most reasonable objections with imputations of want of loyalty; and they gave some excuse for the suspicion that they wished to provoke the Opposition into some expression that might make them odious to the Queen and the Prince. Mr. Hume, the economist, proposed that the annuity be reduced from 50,000*l.* to 21,000*l.* This was negatived. Thereupon Colonel Sibthorp, a once famous Tory fanatic of the most eccentric manners and opinions, proposed that the sum be 30,000*l.*, and he received the support of Sir Robert Peel and other eminent members of the Opposition, and the amendment was carried.

These were not auspicious incidents to prelude the Royal marriage. There can be no doubt that for a time the Queen, still more than the

Prince, felt their influence keenly. The Prince showed remarkable good sense and appreciation of the condition of political arrangements in England, and readily comprehended that there was nothing personal to himself in any objections which the House of Commons might have made to the proposals of the Ministry. The question of precedence was very easily settled when it came to be discussed in reasonable fashion; although it was not until many years after, 1857, that the title of Prince Consort was given to the husband of the Queen.

A few months after the marriage, a bill was passed providing for a regency in the possible event of the death of the Queen, leaving issue. With the entire concurrence of the leaders of the Opposition, who were consulted this time, Prince Albert was named Regent, following the precedent which had been adopted in the instance of the Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold. The Duke of Sussex, uncle of the Queen, alone dissented in the House of Lords, and recorded his protest against the proposal. The passing of this bill was naturally regarded as of much importance to Prince Albert. It gave him to some extent the status in the country which he had not had before. It also proved that the Prince himself had risen in the estimation of the Tory party during the few months that elapsed since the debates on the annuity and the question of precedence. No one could have started with a more resolute determination to stand clear of party politics than Prince Albert. He accepted at once his position as the husband of the Queen of a constitutional country. His own idea of his duty was that he should be the private secretary and unofficial counsellor of the Queen. To this purpose he devoted himself unswervingly. Outside that part of his duties, he constituted himself a sort of minister, without portfolio, of art and education. He took an interest, and often a leading part, in all projects and movements relating to the spread of education, the culture of art, and the promotion of industrial science. Yet it was long before he was thoroughly understood by the country. It was long before he became in any degree popular; and it may be doubted whether he ever was thoroughly and generally popular. Not perhaps until his untimely death did the country find out how entirely disinterested and faithful his life had been, and how he had made the discharge of duty his business and his task. His character was one which is liable to be regarded by ordinary observers as possessing none but negative virtues. He was thought to be cold, formal, and apathetic. His manners were somewhat shy and constrained, except when he was in the company of those he loved, and then he commonly relaxed into a kind of boyish freedom and joyousness. But to the public in general he seemed formal and chilling. It is not only Mr. Pendennis who conceals his gentleness under a shy and pompous demeanour. With all his ability, his anxiety

to learn, his capacity for patient study, and his willingness to welcome new ideas, he never perhaps quite understood the genius of the English political system. His faithful friend and counsellor, Baron Stockmar, was not the man best calculated to set him right on this subject. Both were far too eager to find in the English Constitution a piece of symmetrical mechanism, or to treat it as a written code from which one might take extracts or construct summaries for constant reference and guidance. But this was not in the beginning the cause of any coldness towards the Prince on the part of the English public. Prince Albert had not the ways of an Englishman, and the tendency of Englishmen, then as now, was to assume that to have manners other than those of an Englishman was to be so far unworthy of confidence. He was not made to shine in commonplace society. He could talk admirably about something, but he had not the gift of talking about nothing, and probably would not have cared much to cultivate such a faculty. He was fond of suggesting small innovations and improvements in established systems, to the annoyance of men with set ideas, who liked their own ways best. Thus it happened that he remained for many years, if not exactly unappreciated, yet not thoroughly appreciated, and that a considerable and very influential section of society was always ready to cavil at what he said, and find motive for suspicion in most things that he did. Perhaps he was best understood and most cordially appreciated among the poorer classes of his wife's subjects. He found also more cordial approval generally among the Radicals than among the Tories, or even the Whigs.

One reform which Prince Albert worked earnestly to bring about, was the abolition of duelling in the army, and the substitution of some system of courts of honourable arbitration to supersede the barbaric recourse to the decision of weapons. He did not succeed in having his courts of honour established. There was something too fanciful in the scheme to attract the authorities of our two services; and there were undoubtedly many practical difficulties in the way of making such a system effective. But he succeeded so far, that he induced the Duke of Wellington and the heads of the services to turn their attention very seriously to the subject, and to use all the influence in their power for the purpose of discouraging and discrediting the odious practice of the duel. It is carrying courtly politeness too far to attribute the total disappearance of the duelling system, as one biographer seems inclined to do, to the personal efforts of Prince Albert. It is enough to his honour that he did his best, and that the best was a substantial contribution towards so great an object. But nothing can testify more strikingly to the rapid growth of a genuine civilisation in Queen Victoria's reign than the utter discontinuance of the

duelling system. When the Queen came to the throne, and for years after, it was still in full force. The duel plays a conspicuous part in the fiction and the drama of the Sovereign's earlier years. It was a common incident of all political controversies. It was an episode of most contested elections. It was often resorted to for the purpose of deciding the right or wrong of a half-drunken quarrel over a card table. It formed as common a theme of gossip as an elopement or a bankruptcy. Most of the eminent statesmen who were prominent in the earlier part of the Queen's reign had fought duels. Peel and O'Connell had made arrangements for a 'meeting.' Mr. Disraeli had challenged O'Connell or any of the sons of O'Connell. The great agitator himself had killed his man in a duel. Mr. Roebuck had gone out; Mr. Cobden at a much later period had been visited with a challenge, and had had the good sense and the moral courage to laugh at it. At the present hour a duel in England would seem as absurd and barbarous an anachronism as an ordeal by touch or a witch-burning. Many years have passed since a duel was last talked of in Parliament; and then it was only the subject of a reprobation that had some work to do to keep its countenance while administering the proper rebuke. But it was not the influence of any one man, or even any class of men, that brought about in so short a time this striking change in the tone of public feeling and morality. The change was part of the growth of education and of civilisation; of the strengthening and broadening influence of the press, the platform, the cheap book, the pulpit, and the less restricted intercourse of classes.

This is perhaps as suitable a place as any other to introduce some notice of the attempts that were made from time to time upon the life of the Queen. It is proper to say something of them, although not one possessed the slightest political importance, or could be said to illustrate anything more than sheer lunacy, or that morbid vanity and thirst for notoriety that is nearly akin to genuine madness. The first attempt was made on June 10, 1840, by Edward Oxford, a potboy of seventeen, who fired two shots at the Queen as she was driving up Constitution Hill with Prince Albert. Oxford fired both shots deliberately enough, but happily missed in each case. He proved to have been an absurd creature, half crazy with a longing to consider himself a political prisoner and to be talked of. When he was tried, the jury pronounced him insane, and he was ordered to be kept in a lunatic asylum during her Majesty's pleasure. The trial completely dissipated some wild alarms that were felt, founded chiefly on absurd papers in Oxford's possession, about a tremendous secret society called 'Young England,' having among its other objects the assassination of royal personages. It is a not uninteresting illustration

of the condition of public feeling, that some of the Irish Catholic papers in seeming good faith denounced Oxford as an agent of the Duke of Cumberland and the Orangemen, and declared that the object was to assassinate the Queen and put the Duke on the throne. The trial showed that Oxford was the agent of nobody, and was impelled by nothing but his own crack-brained love of notoriety. The finding of the jury was evidently something of a compromise, for it is very doubtful whether the boy was insane in the medical sense, and whether he was fairly to be held irresponsible for his actions. But it was felt perhaps that the wisest course was to treat him as a madman; and the result did not prove unsatisfactory. Mr. Theodore Martin, in his 'Life of the Prince Consort,' expresses a different opinion. He thinks it would have been well if Oxford had been dealt with as guilty in the ordinary way. 'The best commentary,' he says, 'on the lenity thus shown was pronounced by Oxford himself, on being told of the similar attempts of Francis and Bean in 1842, when he declared that if he had been hanged there would have been no more shooting at the Queen.' It may be reasonably doubted whether the authority of Oxford as to the general influence of criminal legislation is very valuable. Against the philosophic opinion of the half-crazy young potboy on which Mr. Martin places so much reliance, may be set the fact, that in other countries where attempts on the life of the sovereign have been punished by the stern award of death, it has not been found that the execution of one fanatic was a safe protection against the murderous fanaticism of another.

On May 30, 1842, a man named John Francis, son of a machinist in Drury Lane, fired a pistol at the Queen as she was driving down Constitution Hill, on the very spot where Oxford's attempt was made. This was a somewhat serious attempt, for Francis was not more than a few feet from the carriage, which fortunately was driving at a very rapid rate. The Queen showed great composure. She was in some measure prepared for the attempt, for it seems certain that the same man had on the previous evening presented a pistol at the royal carriage, although he did not then fire it. Francis was arrested and put on trial. He was only twenty-two years of age, and although at first he endeavoured to brazen it out and put on a sort of melodramatic regicide aspect, yet when the sentence of death for high treason was passed on him he fell into a swoon and was carried insensible from the court. The sentence was not carried into effect. It was not certain whether the pistol was loaded at all, and whether the whole performance was not a mere piece of brutal play-acting done out of a longing to be notorious. Her Majesty herself was anxious that the death sentence should not be carried into effect, and it was finally

commuted to one of transportation for life. The very day after this mitigation of punishment became publicly known another attempt was made by a hunchbacked lad named Bean. As the Queen was passing from Buckingham Palace to the Chapel Royal, Bean presented a pistol at her carriage, but did not succeed in firing it before his hand was seized by a prompt and courageous boy who was standing near. The pistol was found to be loaded with powder, paper closely rammed down, and some scraps of a clay pipe. It may be asked whether the argument of Mr. Martin is not fully borne out by this occurrence, and whether the fact of Bean's attempt having been made on the day after the commutation of the capital sentence in the case of Francis is not evidence that the leniency in the former instance was the cause of the attempt made in the latter. But it was made clear, and the fact is recorded on the authority of Prince Albert himself, that Bean had announced his determination to make the attempt several days before the sentence of Francis was commuted, and while Francis was actually lying under sentence of death. With regard to Francis himself, the Prince was clearly of opinion that to carry out the capital sentence would have been nothing less than a judicial murder, as it is essential that the act should be committed with intent to kill or wound, and in Francis's case to all appearance this was not the fact, or at least it was open to grave doubt. In this calm and wise way did the husband of the Queen, who had always shared with her whatever of danger there might be in the attempts, argue as to the manner in which they ought to be dealt with. The ambition which fired most or all of the miscreants who thus disturbed the Queen and the country was that of the mountebank rather than of the assassin. The Queen herself showed how thoroughly she understood the significance of all that had happened, when she declared, according to Mr. Martin, that she expected a repetition of the attempts on her life so long as the law remained unaltered by which they could be dealt with only as acts of high treason. The seeming dignity of martyrdom had something fascinating in it to morbid vanity or crazy fanaticism, while on the other hand it was almost certain that the martyr's penalty would not in the end be inflicted. A very appropriate change in the law was effected by which a punishment at once sharp and degrading was provided even for mere mountebank attempts against the Queen ; a punishment which was certain to be inflicted. A bill was introduced by Sir Robert Peel making such attempts punishable by transportation for seven years, or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years, 'the culprit to be publicly or privately whipped as often and in such manner as the court shall direct, not exceeding thrice.' Bean was convicted under this act and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment in

Millbank Penitentiary. This did not, however, conclude the attacks on the Queen. An Irish bricklayer, named Hamilton, fired a pistol, charged only with powder, at her Majesty, on Constitution Hill, on May 19, 1849, and was sentenced to seven years' transportation. A man named Robert Pate, once a lieutenant of hussars, struck her Majesty on the face with a stick as she was leaving the Duke of Cambridge's residence in her carriage on May 27, 1850. This man was sentenced to seven years' transportation, but the judge paid so much attention to the plea of insanity set up on his behalf, as to omit from his punishment the whipping which might have been ordered. Finally, on February 29, 1872, a lad of seventeen, named Arthur O'Connor, presented a pistol at the Queen as she was entering Buckingham Palace after a drive. The pistol, however, proved to be unloaded—an antique and useless or harmless weapon, with a flint lock which was broken, and in the barrel a piece of greasy red rag. The wretched lad held a paper in one hand which was found to be some sort of petition on behalf of the Fenian prisoners. When he came up for trial a plea of insanity was put in on his behalf, but he did not seem to be insane in the sense of being irresponsible for his actions or incapable of understanding the penalty they involved, and he was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment and a whipping. We have hurried over many years for the purpose of completing this painful and ludicrous catalogue of the attempts made against the Queen. It will be seen that in not a single instance was there the slightest political significance to be attached to them. Even in our own softened and civilised time it sometimes happens that an attempt is made on the life of a sovereign which, however we may condemn and reprobate it on moral grounds, yet does seem to bear a distinct political meaning, and to show that there are fanatical minds still burning under some sense of national or personal wrong. But in the various attacks which were made on Queen Victoria nothing of the kind was even pretended. There was no opportunity for any vapouring about Brutus and Charlotte Corday. The impulse, where it was not that of sheer insanity, was of kin to the vulgar love of notoriety in certain minds which sets on those whom it pervades to mutilate noble works of art and scrawl their autographs on the marble of immortal monuments. There was a great deal of wisdom shown in not dealing too severely with most of these offences and in not treating them too much *au sérieux*. Prince Albert himself said that 'the vindictive feeling of the common people would be a thousand times more dangerous than the madness of individuals.' There was not indeed the slightest danger at any time that the 'common people' of England could be wrought up to any sympathy with assassination; nor was this what Prince Albert meant. But the Queen and her

husband were yet new to power, and the people had not quite lost all memory of sovereigns who, well-meaning enough, had yet scarcely understood constitutional government, and there were wild rumours of reaction this way and revolution that way. It might have fomented a feeling of distrust and dissatisfaction if the people had seen any disposition on the part of those in authority to strain the criminal law for the sake of enforcing a death penalty against creatures like Oxford and Bean. The most alarming and unnerving of all dangers to a ruler is that of assassination. Even the best and most blameless sovereign is not wholly secure against it. The hand of Oxford might have killed the Queen. Perhaps however, the best protection a sovereign can have is not to exaggerate the danger. There is no safety in mere severity of punishment. Where the attempt is serious and desperate, it is that of a fanaticism which holds its life in its hand, and is not to be deterred by fear of death. The tortures of Ravaillac did not deter Damiens. The birch in the case of Bean and O'Connor may effectively discountenance enterprises which are born of the mountebank's and not the fanatic's spirit.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE OPIUM WAR.

THE Opium dispute with China was going on when the Queen came to the throne. The Opium War broke out soon after. On March 3, 1843, five huge waggons, each of them drawn by four horses, and the whole under escort of a detachment of the 60th Regiment, arrived in front of the Mint. An immense crowd followed the waggons. It was seen that they were filled with boxes; and one of the boxes having been somewhat broken in its journey, the crowd were able to see that it was crammed full of odd-looking silver coins. The lookers-on were delighted, as well as amused, by the sight of this huge consignment of treasure; and when it became known that the silver money was the first instalment of the China ransom, there were lusty cheers given as the waggons passed through the gates of the Mint. This was a payment on account of the war indemnity imposed on China. Nearly four millions and a half sterling was the sum of the indemnity, in addition to one million and a quarter which had already been paid by the Chinese authorities. Many readers may remember that for some time 'China money' was regularly set down as an item in the revenues of each year with which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to deal. The China War, of which this money was the spoil, was not perhaps an event of which the nation was entitled to be very proud. It was

the precursor of other wars; the policy on which it was conducted has never since ceased altogether to be a question of more or less excited controversy; but it may safely be asserted that if the same events were to occur in our day it would be hardly possible to find a Ministry to originate a war, for which at the same time it must be owned that the vast majority of the people, of all politics and classes, were only too ready then to find excuse and even justification. The waggon-loads of silver conveyed into the Mint amid the cheers of the crowd were the spoils of the famous Opium War.

Reduced to plain words, the principle for which we fought in the China War was the right of Great Britain to force a peculiar trade upon a foreign people in spite of the protestations of the Government and all such public opinion as there was of the nation. Of course this was not the avowed motive of the war. Not often in history is the real and inspiring motive of a war proclaimed in so many words by those who carry it on. Not often, indeed, is it seen, naked and avowed, even in the minds of its promoters themselves. As the quarrel between this country and China went on, a great many minor and incidental subjects of dispute arose which for the moment put the one main and original question out of people's minds; and in the course of these discussions it happened more than once that the Chinese authorities took some steps which put them decidedly in the wrong. Thus it is true enough that there were particular passages of the controversy when the English Government had all or nearly all of the right on their side so far as the immediate incident of the dispute was concerned; and when, if that had been the whole matter of quarrel, or if the quarrel had begun there, a patriotic minister might have been justified in thinking that the Chinese were determined to offend England, and deserved humiliation. But no consideration of this kind can now hide from our eyes the fact that in the beginning and the very origin of the quarrel we were distinctly in the wrong. We asserted, or at least acted on the assertion of, a claim so unreasonable and even monstrous that it never could have been made upon any nation strong enough to render its assertion a matter of serious responsibility. The most important lessons a nation can learn from its own history are found in the exposure of its own errors. Historians have sometimes done more evil than court flatterers when they have gone about to glorify the errors of their own people, and to make wrong appear right, because an English Government talked the public opinion of the time into a confusion of principles.

The whole principle of Chinese civilisation, at the time when the Opium War broke out, was based on conditions which to any modern nation must seem erroneous and unreasonable. The Chinese governments and people

desired to have no political relations or dealings whatever with any other State. They were not so obstinately set against private and commercial dealings; but they would have no political intercourse with foreigners, and they would not even recognise the existence of foreign peoples as States. They were perfectly satisfied with themselves and their own systems. They were convinced that their own systems were not only wise but absolutely perfect. It is superfluous to say that this was in itself evidence of ignorance and self-conceit. A belief in the perfection of their own systems could only exist among a people who knew nothing of any other systems. But absurd as the idea must appear to us, yet the Chinese might have found a good deal to say for it. It was the result of a civilisation so ancient that the oldest events preserved in European history were but as yesterday in the comparison. Whatever its errors and defects, it was distinctly a civilisation. It was a system with a literature and laws and institutions of its own; it was a coherent and harmonious social and political system which had on the whole worked tolerably well. It was not very unlike in its principles the kind of civilisation which at one time it was the whim of men of genius, like Rousseau and Diderot, to idealize and admire. The European, of whatever nation, may be said to like change, and to believe in its necessity. His instincts and his convictions alike tend this way. The sleepiest of Europeans—the Neapolitan who lies with his feet in the water on the Chiaja; the Spaniard, who smokes his cigar and sips his coffee as if life had no active business whatever; the *flâneur* of the Paris boulevards; the beggar who lounged from cabin to cabin in Ireland a generation ago—all these, no matter how little inclined for change themselves, would be delighted to hear of travel and enterprise, and of new things and new discoveries. But to the Chinese, of all Eastern races, the very idea of travel and change was something repulsive and odious. As the thought of having to go a day unwashed would be to the educated Englishman of our age, or as the edge of a precipice is to a nervous man, so was the idea of innovation to the Chinese of that time. The ordinary Oriental dreads and detests change; but the Chinese at that time went as far beyond the ordinary Oriental as the latter goes beyond an average Englishman. In the present day a considerable alteration has taken place in this respect. The Chinese have had innovation after innovation forced on them, until at last they have taken up with the new order of things, like people who feel that it is idle to resist their fate any longer. The emigration from China has been as remarkable as that from Ireland or Germany; and the United States finds itself confronted with a question of the first magnitude when it asks itself what is to be the influence and operation of the descent of the Chinese populations along the

Pacific slope. Japan has put on modern and European civilisation like a garment. Japan effected in a few years a revolution in the political constitution and the social habits of her people, and in their very way of looking at things, the like of which no other State ever accomplished in a century. But nothing of all this was thought of at the time of the China War. The one thing which China asked of European civilisation and the thing called Modern Progress was to be let alone. China's prayer to Europe was that of Diogenes to Alexander—'Stand out of my sunshine.'

It was, as we have said, to political relationships rather than to private and commercial dealings with foreign peoples that the Chinese felt an unconquerable objection. They did not indeed like even private and commercial dealings with foreigners. They would much rather have lived without ever seeing the face of a foreigner. But they had put up with the private intrusion of foreigners and trade, and had had dealings with American traders, and with the East India Company. The charter and the exclusive rights of the East India Company expired in April 1834; the charter was renewed under different conditions, and the trade with China was thrown open. One of the great branches of the East India Company's business with China was the opium trade. When the trading privileges ceased this traffic was taken up briskly by private merchants, who bought of the Company the opium which they grew in India and sold it to the Chinese. The Chinese governments, and all teachers, moralists, and persons of education in China, had long desired to get rid of or put down this trade in opium. They considered it highly detrimental to the morals, the health and the prosperity of the people. Of late the destructive effects of opium have often been disputed, particularly in the House of Commons. It has been said that it is not on the average nearly so unwholesome as the Chinese governments always thought, and that it does not do as much proportionate harm to China as the use of brandy, whisky, and gin does to England. It seems to this writer hardly possible to doubt that the use of opium is, on the whole, a curse to any nation; but, even if this were not so, the question between England and the Chinese governments would remain just the same. The Chinese governments may have taken exaggerated views of the evils of the opium trade; their motives in wishing to put it down may have been mixed with considerations of interest as much political as philanthropic. Lord Palmerston insisted that the Chinese government were not sincere in their professed objection on moral grounds to the traffic. If they were sincere, he asked, why did they not prevent the growth of the poppy in China? It was, he tersely put it, an 'exportation of bullion question, an agricultural protection question;' it was a question of the poppy interest in China, and of the economists who

wished to prevent the exportation of the precious metals. It is curious that such arguments as this could have weighed with anyone for a moment. It was no business of ours to ask ourselves whether the Chinese government were perfectly sincere in their professions of a lofty morality, or whether they, unlike all other governments that have ever been known, were influenced by one sole motive in the making of their regulations. All that had nothing to do with the question. States are not at liberty to help the subjects of other States to break the laws of their own governments. Especially when these laws even profess to concern questions of morals, is it the duty of foreign States not to interfere with the regulations which a government considers it necessary to impose for the protection of its people. All traffic in opium was strictly forbidden by the governments and laws of China. Yet our English traders carried on a brisk and profitable trade in the forbidden article. Nor was this merely an ordinary smuggling, or a business akin to that of the blockade running during the American civil war. The arrangements with the Chinese Government allowed the existence of all establishments and machinery for carrying on a general trade at Canton and Macao; and under cover of these arrangements the opium traders set up their regular head-quarters in these towns.

Let us find an illustration intelligible to readers of the present day, to show how unjustifiable was this practice. The State of Maine, as everyone knows, prohibits the common sale of spirituous liquors. Let us suppose that several companies of English merchants were formed in Portland and Augusta, and the other towns of Maine, for the purpose of brewing beer and distilling whisky, and selling both to the public of Maine in defiance of the State laws. Let us further suppose that when the authorities of Maine proceeded to put the State laws in force against these intruders, our Government here took up the cause of the whisky sellers, and sent an ironclad fleet to Portland to compel the people of Maine to put up with them. It seems impossible to think of any English Government taking such a course as this; or of the English public enduring it for one moment. In the case of such a nation as the United States, nothing of the kind would be possible. The serious responsibilities of any such undertaking would make even the most thoughtless minister pause, and would give the public in general some time to think the matter over; and before any freak of the kind could be attempted the conscience of the nation would be aroused, and the unjust policy would have to be abandoned. But in dealing with China the Ministry never seems to have thought the right or wrong of the question a matter worthy of any consideration. The controversy was entered upon with as light a heart as a modern war of still graver moment. The people in general knew nothing

about the matter until it had gone so far that the original point of dispute was almost out of sight, and it seemed as if the safety of English subjects and the honour of England were compromised in some way by the high-handed proceedings of the Chinese Government.

The English Government appointed superintendents to manage our commercial dealings with China. Unluckily these superintendents were invested with a sort of political or diplomatic character, and thus from the first became objectionable to the Chinese authorities. One of the first of these superintendents acted in disregard of the express instructions of his own Government. He was told that he must not pass the entrance of the Canton river in a vessel of war, as the Chinese authorities always made a marked distinction between ships of war and merchant vessels in regard to the freedom of intercourse. Misunderstandings occurred at every new step of negotiation. These misunderstandings were natural. Our people knew hardly anything about the Chinese. The limitation of our means of communication with them made this ignorance inevitable, but certainly did not excuse our acting as if we were in possession of the fullest and most accurate information. The manner in which some of our official instructors went on was well illustrated by a sentence in the speech of Sir James Graham, during the debate on the whole subject in the House of Commons in April, 1840. It was, Sir James Graham said, as if a foreigner who was occasionally permitted to anchor at the Nore, and at times to land at Wapping, being placed in close confinement during his continuance there, were to pronounce a deliberate opinion upon the resources, the genius, and the character of the British Empire.

Our representatives were generally disposed to be unyielding; and not only that, but to see deliberate offence in every Chinese usage or ceremony which the authorities endeavoured to impose on them. On the other hand, it is clear that the Chinese authorities thoroughly detested them and their mission, and all about them, and often made or countenanced delays that were unnecessary, and interferences which were disagreeable and offensive. The Chinese believed from the first that the superintendents were there merely to protect the opium trade, and to force on China political relations with the West. Practically this was the effect of their presence. The superintendents took no steps to aid the Chinese authorities in stopping the hated trade. The British traders naturally enough thought that the British Government were determined to protect them in carrying it on. Indeed the superintendents themselves might well have had the same conviction. The Government at home allowed Captain Elliott, the chief superintendent, to make appeal after appeal for instructions without paying the slightest attention to him. Captain Elliott saw

that the opium traders were growing more and more reckless and audacious; that they were thrusting their trade under the very eyes of the Chinese authorities. He also saw, as everyone on the spot must have seen, that the authorities, who had been so apathetic for a long time, were now at last determined to go any lengths to put down the traffic. At length the English Government announced to Captain Elliott the decision which they ought to have made known months, not to say years before, that 'her Majesty's Government could not interfere for the purpose of enabling British subjects to violate the laws of the country with which they trade;' and that 'any loss therefore which such persons may suffer in consequence of the more effectual execution of the Chinese laws on this subject must be borne by the parties who have brought that loss on themselves by their own acts.' This very wise and proper resolve came, however, too late. The British traders had been allowed to go on for a long time under the full conviction that the protection of the English Government was behind them and wholly at their service. Captain Elliott himself seems to have now believed that the announcement of his superiors was but a graceful diplomatic figure of speech. When the Chinese authorities actually proceeded to insist on the forfeiture of an immense quantity of the opium in the hands of British traders, and took other harsh, but certainly not unnatural measures to extinguish the traffic, Captain Elliott sent to the Governor of India a request for as many ships of war as could be spared for the protection of the life and property of Englishmen in China. Before long British ships arrived; and the two countries were at war.

It is not necessary to describe the successive steps by which the war came on. It was inevitable from the moment that the English superintendent identified himself with the protection of the opium trade. The English believed that the Chinese authorities were determined on war, and only waiting for a convenient moment to make a treacherous beginning. The Chinese were convinced that from the first we had meant nothing but war. Such a condition of feeling on both sides would probably have made war unavoidable, even in the case of two nations who had far much better ways of understanding each other than the English and Chinese. It is not surprising if the English people at home knew little of the original causes of the controversy. All that presented itself to their mind was the fact that Englishmen were in danger in a foreign country; that they were harshly treated and recklessly imprisoned; that their lives were in jeopardy, and that the flag of England was insulted. There was a general notion too, that the Chinese were a barbarous and a ridiculous people who had no alphabet, and thought themselves much better than any other people, even the English, and that, on the whole, it would be a

good thing to take the conceit out of them. Those who remember what the common feeling of ordinary society was at the time, will admit that it did not reach a much loftier level than this. The matter was, however, taken up more seriously in Parliament.

The policy of the Government was challenged in the House of Commons, but with results of more importance to the existing composition of the English Cabinet than to the relations between this country and China. Sir James Graham moved a resolution condemning the policy of Ministers, for having by its uncertainty and other errors brought about the war, which, however, he did not then think it possible to avoid. A debate which continued for three days took place. It was marked by the same curious mixture of parties which we have seen in debates on China questions in days nearer to the present. The defence of the Government was opened by Mr. Macaulay, who had been elected for Edinburgh and appointed Secretary at War. The defence consisted chiefly in the argument that we could not have put the trade in opium down, no matter how earnest we had been, and that it was not necessary or possible to keep on issuing frequent instructions to agents so far away as our representatives in China. Mr. Macaulay actually drew from our experience in India an argument in support of his position. We cannot govern India from London, he insisted; we must, for the most part, govern India in India. One can imagine how Macaulay would in one of his essays have torn into pieces such an argument coming from any advocate of a policy opposed to his own. The reply, indeed, is almost too obvious to need any exposition. In India the complete materials of administration were in existence. There was a Governor-General, there were councillors, there was an army. The men best qualified to rule the country were there, provided with all the appliances and forces of rule. In China we had an agent with a vague and anomalous office dropped down in the middle of a hostile people, possessed neither of recognised authority nor of power to enforce its recognition. It was probably true enough that we could not have put down the opium trade; that even with all the assistance of the Chinese Government we could have done no more than to drive it from one port in order to see it make its appearance at another. But what we ought to have done is, therefore, only the more clear. We ought to have announced from the first, and in the firmest tone, that we would have nothing to do with the trade; that we would not protect it; and we ought to have held to this determination. As it was, we allowed our traders to remain under the impression that we were willing to support them, until it was too late to undeceive them with any profit to their safety or our credit. The Chinese authorities acted after a while with a high-handed disregard of

fairness, and of anything like what we should call the responsibility of law; but it is evident that they believed they were themselves the objects of lawless intrusion and enterprise. There were on the part of the Government great efforts made to represent the motion as an attempt to prevent the Ministry from exacting satisfaction from the Chinese Government, and from protecting the lives and interests of Englishmen in China. But it is unfortunately only too often the duty of statesmen to recognise the necessity of carrying on a war, even while they are of opinion that they whose mismanagement brought about the war deserve condemnation. When Englishmen are being imprisoned and murdered, the innocent just as well as the guilty, in a foreign country—when, in short, war is actually going on—it is not possible for English statesmen in opposition to say, 'We will not allow England to strike a blow in defence of our fellow-countrymen and our flag, because we are of opinion that better judgment on the part of our Government would have spared us the beginning of such a war.' There was really no inconsistency in recognising the necessity of carrying on the war, and at the same time censuring the Ministry who had allowed the necessity to be forced upon us. Sir Robert Peel quoted with great effect, during the debate, the example of Fox, who declared his readiness to give every help to the prosecution of a war which the very same day he proposed to censure the Ministry for having brought upon the country. With all their efforts, the Ministers were only able to command a majority of nine votes as the result of the three days' debate.

The war, however, went on. It was easy work enough so far as England was concerned. It was on our side nothing but a succession of cheap victories. The Chinese fought very bravely in a great many instances; and they showed still more often a Spartan-like resolve not to survive defeat. When one of the Chinese cities was taken by Sir Hugh Gough, the Tartar general went into his house as soon as he saw that all was lost, made his servants set fire to the building, and calmly sat in his chair until he was burned to death. One of the English officers writes of the same attack, that it was impossible to compute the loss of the Chinese, 'for when they found they could stand no longer against us, they cut the throats of their wives and children, or drove them into wells or ponds, and then destroyed themselves. In many houses there were from eight to twelve dead bodies, and I myself saw a dozen women and children drowning themselves in a small pond, the day after the fight.' We quickly captured the island of Chusan, on the east coast of China; a part of our squadron went up the Peiho river to threaten the capital; negotiations were opened, and the preliminaries of a treaty were made out, to which, however, neither the English Government nor the Chinese would

agree, and the war was reopened. Chusan was again taken by us; Ningpo, a large city a few miles in on the mainland, fell into our hands; Amoy, farther south, was captured; our troops were before Nankin, when the Chinese Government at last saw how futile was the idea of resisting our arms. Their women or their children might just as well have attempted to encounter our soldiers. With all the bravery which the Chinese often displayed, there was something pitiful, pathetic, ludicrous, in the simple and childlike attempts which they made to carry on war against us. They made peace at last on any terms we chose to ask. We asked in the first instance the cession in perpetuity to us of the island of Hong-Kong. Of course we got it. Then we asked that five ports, Canton, Amoy, Foo-Chow-Foo, Ningpo, and Shanghai, should be thrown open to British traders, and that consuls should be established there. Needless to say that this too was conceded. Then it was agreed that the indemnity already mentioned should be paid by the Chinese Government—some four millions and a half sterling, in addition to one million and a quarter as compensation for the destroyed opium. It was also stipulated that correspondence between officials of the two Governments was thenceforth to be carried on upon equal terms. The war was over for the present, and the thanks of both Houses of Parliament were voted to the fleet and army engaged in the operations. The Duke of Wellington moved the vote of thanks in the House of Lords. He could hardly help, one would think, forming in his mind as he spoke an occasional contrast between the services which he asked the House to honour, and the sort of warfare which it had been his glorious duty to engage in so long. The Duke of Wellington was a simple-minded man, with little sense of humour. He did not probably perceive himself the irony that others might have seen in the fact that the conqueror of Napoleon, the victor in years of warfare against soldiers unsurpassed in history, should have had to move a vote of thanks to the fleet and army which triumphed over the unarmed, helpless, childlike Chinese.

The whole chapter of history ended, not inappropriately perhaps, with a rather pitiful dispute between the English Government and the English traders about the amount of compensation to which the latter laid claim for their destroyed opium. The Government were in something of a difficulty; for they had formally announced that they were resolved to let the traders abide by any loss which their violation of the laws of China might bring upon them. But, on the other hand, they had identified themselves by the war with the cause of the traders; and one of the conditions of peace had been the compensation for the opium. The traders insisted that the amount given for this purpose by the Chinese Government

did not nearly meet their losses. The English Government, on the other hand, would not admit that they were bound in any way further to make good the losses of the merchants. The traders demanded to be compensated according to the price of opium at the time the seizure was made; a demand which, if we admit any claim at all, seems only fair and reasonable. The Government had clearly undertaken their cause in the end, and were hardly in a position either logical or dignified, when they afterwards chose to say, 'Yes, we admit that we did undertake to get you redress, but we do not think now that we are bound to give you full redress.' At last, the matter was compromised; the merchants had to take what they could get, something considerably below their demand, and give in return to the Government an immediate acquittance in full. It is hard to get up any feeling of sympathy with the traders who lost on such a speculation. It is hard to feel any regret even if the Government which had done so much for them in the war treated them so shabbily when the war was over; but that they were treated shabbily in the final settlement seems to us to allow of no doubt.

The Chinese war then was over for the time. But as the children say that snow brings more snow, so did that war with China bring other wars to follow it.

## CHAPTER IX.

### DECLINE AND FALL OF THE WHIG MINISTRY.

The Melbourne Ministry kept going from bad to worse. There was a great stirring in the country all around them, which made their feebleness the more conspicuous. We sometimes read in history a defence of some particular sovereign whom common opinion cries down, the defence being a reference to the number of excellent measures that were set in motion during his reign. If we were to judge of the Melbourne Ministry on the same principle, it might seem indeed as if their career was one of extreme activity and fruitfulness. Reforms were astir in almost every direction. Inquiries into the condition of our poor and our labouring classes were, to use a cant phrase of the time, the order of the day. The foundation of the colony of New Zealand was laid with a philosophical deliberation and thoughtfulness which might have reminded one of Locke and the Constitution of the Carolinas. Some of the first comprehensive and practical measures to mitigate the rigour and to correct the indiscriminateness of the death punishment were taken during this period. One of the first legislative enactments which fairly acknowledged the difference between an

English wife and a purchased slave, so far as the despotic power of the master was concerned, belongs to the same time. This was the Custody of Infants Bill, the object of which was to obtain for mothers of irreproachable conduct, who through no fault of theirs were living apart from their husbands, occasional access to their children, with the permission and under the control of the Equity Judges. It is curious to notice how long and how fiercely this modest measure of recognition for what may almost be called the natural rights of a wife and a mother was disputed in Parliament, or at least in the House of Lords.

It is curious too to notice what a clamour was raised over the small contribution to the cause of national education which was made by the Melbourne Government. In 1834 the first grant of public money for the purposes of elementary education was made by Parliament. The sum granted was twenty thousand pounds, and the same grant was made every year until 1839. Then Lord John Russell asked for an increase of ten thousand pounds, and proposed a change in the manner of appropriating the money. Up to that time the grant had been distributed through the National School Society, a body in direct connection with the Church of England, and the British and Foreign School Association, which admitted children of all Christian denominations without imposing on them sectarian teaching. The money was dispensed by the Lords of the Treasury, who gave aid to applicants in proportion to the size and cost of the school buildings and the number of children who attended them. Naturally, the result of such an arrangement was, that the districts which needed help the most got it the least. If a place was so poor as not to be able to do anything for itself, the Lords of the Treasury would do nothing for it. Naturally too, the rich and powerful Church of England secured the greater part of the grant for itself. There was no inspection of the schools; no reports were made to Parliament as to the manner in which the system worked; no steps were taken to find out if the teachers were qualified or the teaching was good. 'The statistics of the schools,' says a writer in the 'Edinburgh Review,' 'were alone considered: the size of the schoolroom, the cost of the building, and the number of scholars.' In 1839 Lord John Russell proposed to increase the grant, and an Order in Council transferred its distribution to a Committee of the Privy Council composed of the President and not more than five members. Lord John Russell also proposed the appointment of inspectors, the founding of a model school for the training of teachers, and the establishment of infant schools. The model school and the infant schools were to be practically unsectarian. The Committee of the Privy Council were to be allowed to depart from the principle of proportioning their grants to the amount of

local contribution, to establish in poor and crowded places schools not necessarily connected with either of the two educational societies, and to extend their aid even to schools where the Roman Catholic version of the Bible was read. The proposals of the Government were fiercely opposed in both Houses of Parliament. The most various and fantastic forms of bigotry combined against them. The application of public money, and especially through the hands of the Committee of Privy Council, to any schools not under the control and authority of the Church of England was denounced as a State recognition of popery and heresy. Scarcely less marvellous to us now are the speeches of those who promoted than of those who opposed the scheme. Lord John Russell himself, who was much in advance of the common opinion of those among whom he moved, pleaded for the principles of his measure in a tone rather of apology than of actual vindication. He did not venture to oppose point blank the claim of those who insisted that it was part of the sacred right of the Established Church to have the teaching all done in her own way or to allow no teaching at all.

The Government did not get all they sought for. They had a fierce fight for their grant, and an amendment moved by Lord Stanley, to the effect that her Majesty be requested to revoke the Order in Council appointing the Committee on Education, was only negatived by a majority of two votes—275 to 273. In the Lords, to which the struggle was transferred, the Archbishop of Canterbury actually moved and carried by a large majority an address to the Queen praying her to revoke the Order in Council. The Queen replied firmly that the funds voted by Parliament would be found to be laid out in strict accordance with constitutional usage, the rights of conscience, and the safety of the Established Church, and so dismissed the question. The Government therefore succeeded in establishing their Committee of Council on Education, the institution by which our system of public instruction has been managed ever since. The Ministry on the whole showed to advantage in this struggle. They took up a principle and they stood by it. If, as we have said, the speeches made by the promoters of the scheme seem amazing to any intelligent person of our time, because of the feeble, apologetic, and almost craven tone in which they assert the claims of a system of national education, yet it must be admitted that the principle was accepted by the Government at some risk, and that it was not shabbily deserted in the face of hostile pressure. It is worth noticing that while the increased grant and the principles on which it was to be distributed were opposed by such men as Sir Robert Peel, Lord Stanley, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Disraeli, it had the support of Mr. O'Connell and of Mr. Smith O'Brien. Both these Irish

leaders only regretted that the grant was not very much larger, and that it was not appropriated on a more liberal principle. O'Connell was the recognised leader of the Irish Catholics and nationalists; Smith O'Brien was an aristocratic Protestant. With all the weakness of the Whig Ministry, their term of office must at least be remarkable for the new departure it took in the matter of National Education. The appointment of the Committee of Council marks an epoch.

Indeed the history of that time seems full of Reform projects. The parliamentary annals contain the names of various measures of social and political improvement which might in themselves, it would seem, bear witness to the most unsleeping activity on the part of any Ministry. Measures for general registration; for the reduction of the stamp duty on newspapers, and of the duty on paper; for the improvement of the gaol system; for the spread of vaccination; for the regulation of the labour of children; for the prohibition of the employment of any child or young person under twenty-one in the cleaning of chimneys by climbing; for the suppression of the punishment of the pillory; efforts to relieve the Jews from civil disabilities—these are but a few of the many projects of social and political reform that occupied the attention of that busy period, which somehow appears nevertheless to have been so sleepy and do-nothing. How does it come about that we can regard the Ministry in whose time all these things were done or attempted as exhausted and worthless?

One answer is plain. The reforming energy was in the time, and not in the Ministry. In every instance public opinion went far ahead of the inclinations of her Majesty's ministers. There was a just and general conviction that if the Government were left to themselves they would do nothing. When they were driven into any course of improvement they usually did all they could to minimise the amount of reform to be effected. Whatever they undertook they seemed to undertake reluctantly, and as if only with the object of preventing other people from having anything to do with it. Naturally, therefore, they got little or no thanks for any good they might have done. When they brought in a measure to abolish in various cases the punishment of death, they fell so far behind public opinion and the inclinations of the Commission that had for eight years been inquiring into the state of our criminal law, that their bill only passed by very narrow majorities, and impressed many ardent reformers as if it were meant rather to withhold than to advance a genuine reform. In truth, it was a period of enthusiasm and of growth, and the Ministry did not understand this. Lord Melbourne seems to have found it hard to persuade himself that there was any real anxiety in the mind of anyone to do anything in particular. He had apparently got into his mind the

conviction that the only sensible thing the people of England could do was to keep up the Melbourne Ministry, and that being a sensible people they would naturally do this. He had grown into something like the condition of a pampered old hall-porter, who dozing in his chair begins to look on it as an act of rudeness if any visitor to his master presumes to knock at the door and so disturb him from his comfortable rest.

Anyone who doubts that it was really a time of enthusiasm in these countries has only to glance at its history. The Church of England and the Church of Scotland were alike convulsed by movements which were the offspring of a genuine and irresistible enthusiasm—enthusiasm of that strong far-reaching kind which makes epochs in the history of a church or a people. In Ireland Father Mathew, a pious and earnest friar, who had neither eloquence nor learning nor genius, but only enthusiasm and noble purpose, had stirred the hearts of the population in the cause of temperance as thoroughly as Peter the Hermit might have stirred the heart of a people to a crusade. Many of the efforts of social reform which are still periodically made among ourselves had their beginning then, and can scarcely be said to have made much advance from that day to this. In July, 1840, Mr. Hume moved in the House of Commons for an address to the Throne praying that the British Museum and the National Gallery might be opened to the public after Divine service on Sundays, 'at such hours as taverns, beershops and ginshops are legally open.' The motion was of course rejected; but it is worthy of mention now as an evidence of the point to which the spirit of social reform had advanced at a period when Lord Melbourne had seemingly made up his mind that reform had done enough for his generation, and that ministers might be allowed, at least during his time, to eat their meals in peace without being disturbed by the urgencies of restless Radicals or threatened with hostile majorities and Tory successes.

The Stockdale case was a disturbance of ministerial repose which at one time threatened to bring about a collision between the privileges of Parliament and the authority of the law courts. The Messrs. Hansard, the well-known Parliamentary printers, had published certain Parliamentary reports on prisons, in which it happened that a book published by J. J. Stockdale was described as obscene and disgusting in the extreme. Stockdale proceed against the Hansards for libel. The Hansards pleaded the authority of Parliament; but Lord Chief Justice Denman decided that the House of Commons was not Parliament, and had no authority to sanction the publication of libels on individuals. Out of this contradiction of authorities arose a long and often a very unseemly squabble. The House of Commons would not give up its privileges; the law courts would not admit its authority. Judgment was given by default against the Hansards

in one of the many actions for libel which arose out of the affair, and the sheriffs of London were called on to seize and sell some of the Hansards' property to satisfy the demands of the plaintiff. The unhappy sheriffs were placed, as the homely old saying would describe it, between the devil and the deep sea. If they touched the property of the Hansards, they were acting in contempt of the privilege of the House of Commons and were liable to be committed to Newgate. If, on the other hand, they refused to carry out the orders of the Court of Queen's Bench, that court would certainly send them to prison for the refusal. The reality of their dilemma in fact was very soon proved. The amount of the damages was paid into the Sheriff's Court, in order to avoid the scandal of a sale, but under protest; the House of Commons ordered the sheriffs to refund the money to the Hansards; the Court of Queen's Bench was moved for an order to direct the sheriffs to pay it over to Stockdale. The sheriffs were finally committed to the custody of the sergeant-at-arms for contempt of the House of Commons. The Court of Queen's Bench served a writ of *habeas corpus* on the sergeant-at-arms, calling on him to produce the sheriffs in court. The House directed the sergeant-at-arms to inform the court that he held the sheriffs in custody by order of the Commons. The sergeant-at-arms took the sheriffs to the Court of Queen's Bench and made his statement there; his explanation was declared reasonable and sufficient, and he marched his prisoners back again. A great deal of this ridiculous sort of thing went on which it is not now necessary to describe in any detail. The House of Commons, what with the arrest of the sheriffs and of agents acting on behalf of the pertinacious Stockdale, had on their hands batches of prisoners with whom they did not know in the least what to do; the whole affair created immense popular excitement mingled with much ironical laughter. At last the House of Commons had recourse to legislation, and Lord John Russell brought in a bill on March 3, 1840, to afford summary protection to all persons employed in the publication of Parliamentary papers. The preamble of the measure declared that 'Whereas it is essential to the due and effectual discharge of the functions and duties of Parliament that no obstruction should exist to the publication of the reports, papers, votes, or proceedings of either House as such House should deem fit,' it is to be lawful 'for any person or persons against whom any civil or criminal proceedings shall be taken on account of such publication to bring before the court a certificate under the hand of the Lord Chancellor or the Speaker, stating that it was published by the authority of the House, and the proceedings should at once be stayed.' This bill was run quickly through both Houses—not without some opposition or at least murmur in the Upper House—and it became law on April 14. It settled the

question satisfactorily enough, although it certainly did not define the relative rights of Parliament and the courts of law. No difficulty of the same kind has since arisen. The sheriffs and the other prisoners were discharged from custody after a while, and the public excitement went out in quiet laughter.

The question, however, was a very serious one; and it is significant that public opinion was almost entirely on the side of the law courts and the sheriffs. The Ministry must have so fallen in public favour as to bring the House of Commons into disrepute along with them, or such a sentiment could not have prevailed so widely out of doors. The public seemed to see nothing in the whole affair but a tyrannical House of Commons wielding illimitable powers against a few humble individuals, some of whom, the sheriffs for instance, had no share in the controversy except that imposed on them by official duty. Accordingly the sheriffs were the heroes of the hour, and were toasted and applauded all over the country. Assuredly it was an awkward position for the House of Commons to be placed in when it had to vindicate its privileges by committing to prison men who were merely doing a duty which the law courts imposed on them. It would have been better probably if the Government had more firmly asserted the rights of the House of Commons at the beginning, and thus allowed the public to see the real question which the whole controversy involved. Nothing can be more clear now than the paramount importance of securing to each House of Parliament an absolute authority and freedom of publication. No evil that could possibly arise out of the misuse of such a power could be anything like that certain to come of a state of things which restricted, by libel laws or otherwise, the right of either House to publish whatever it thought proper for the public good. Not a single measure for the reform of any great grievance, from the abolition of slavery to the passing of the Factory Acts, but might have been obstructed, and perhaps even prevented, if the free exposure of existing evils were denied to the Houses of Parliament. In this country, Parliament only works through the power of public opinion. A social reform is not carried out simply by virtue of the decision of a cabinet that something ought to be done. The attention of the Legislature and of the public has to be called to the grievance again and again by speeches, resolutions, debates and divisions, before there is any chance of carrying a measure on the subject. When public opinion is ripe, and is strong enough to help the Government through with a reform in spite of prejudices and vested interests, then, and not till then, the reform is carried. But it would be hardly possible to bring the matter up to this stage of growth if those who were interested in upholding a grievance had the power of worrying the

publishers of the Parliamentary reports by legal proceedings in the earlier stages of the discussion. Nor would it be of any use to protect merely the freedom of debate in Parliament itself. It is not through debate, but through publication, that the public opinion of the country is reached. In truth, the poorer a man is, the weaker and the humbler, the greater need is there that he should call out for the full freedom of publication to be vested in the hands of Parliament. The factory child, the climbing boy, the apprentice under colonial systems of modified slavery, the seaman sent to sea in the rotten ship; the woman clad in unwomanly rags who sings her 'Song of a Shirt'; the other woman almost literally unsexed in form, function and soul, who in her filthy trowsers of sacking dragged on all fours the coal trucks in the mines—these are the tyrants and the monopolists for whom we assert the privilege of Parliamentary publication.

The operations which took place about this time in Syria belong perhaps rather to the general history of the Ottoman Empire than to that of England. But they had so important a bearing on the relations between this country and France, and are so directly connected with subsequent events in which England bore a leading part, that it would be impossible to pass them over without some notice here. Mohammed Ali, Pasha of Egypt, the most powerful of all the Sultan's feudatories, a man of iron will and great capacity both for war and administration, had made himself for a time master of Syria. By the aid of the warlike qualities of his adopted son, Ibrahim Pasha, he had defeated the armies of the Porte wherever he had encountered them. Mohammed's victories had for the time compelled the Porte to allow him to remain in power in Syria; but the Sultan had long been preparing to try another effort for the reduction of his ambitious vassal. In 1839 the Sultan again declared war against Mohammed Ali. Ibrahim Pasha again obtained an overwhelming victory over the Turkish army. The energetic Sultan Mahmoud, a man not unworthy to cope with such an adversary as Mohammed Ali, died suddenly; and immediately after his death the Capitan Pasha, or Lord High Admiral of the Ottoman fleet, went over to the Egyptians with all his vessels; an act of almost unexampled treachery even in the history of the Ottoman Empire. It was evident that Turkey was not able to hold her own against the formidable Mohammed and his successful son; and the policy of the Western powers of Europe, and of England especially, had long been to maintain the Ottoman Empire as a necessary part of the common State system. The policy of Russia was to keep up that empire as long as it suited her own purposes; to take care that no other Power got anything out of Turkey; and to prepare the way for such a partition of the spoils

of Turkey as would satisfy Russian interests. Russia therefore was to be found now defending Turkey, and now assailing her. The course taken by Russia was seemingly inconsistent; but it was only inconsistent as the course of a sailing ship may be which now tacks to this side and now to that, but has a clear object in view and a port to reach all the while. England was then and for a long time after steadily bent on preserving the Turkish Empire, and in a great measure as a rampart against the schemes and ambitions imputed to Russia herself. France was less firmly set on the maintenance of Turkey; and France, moreover, had got it into her mind that England had designs of her own on Egypt. Austria was disposed to go generally with England; Prussia was little more than a nominal sharer in the alliance that was now tinkered up. It is evident that such an alliance could not be very harmonious or direct in its action. It was, however, effective enough to prove too strong for the Pasha of Egypt. A fleet made up of English, Austrian and Turkish vessels bombarded Acre; an allied army drove the Egyptians from several of their strongholds. Ibrahim Pasha, with all his courage and genius, was not equal to the odds against which he now saw himself forced to contend. He had to succumb. No one could doubt that he and his father were incomparably better able to give good government and the chances of development to Syria than the Porte had ever been. But in this instance as in others, the odious principle was upheld by England and her actual allies, that the Turkish Empire must be maintained, at no matter what cost of suffering and degradation to its subject populations. Mohammed Ali was deprived of all his Asiatic possessions; but was secured in his government of Egypt. A convention signed at London on July 15, 1840, arranged for the imposition of those terms on Mohammed Ali.

The convention was signed by the representatives of Great Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia, on the one part, and of the Ottoman Porte on the other. The name of France was not found there. France had drawn back from the alliance, and for some time seemed as if she were likely to take arms against it. M. Thiers was then her Prime Minister: he was a man of quick fancy, restless and ambitious temperament, and what we cannot help calling a vulgar spirit of national self-sufficiency—we are speaking now of the Thiers of 1840, not of the wise and capable statesman, tempered and tried by the fire of adversity, who reorganised France out of the ruin and welter of 1870. Thiers persuaded himself and the great majority of his countrymen that England was bent upon driving Mohammed Ali out of Egypt as well as out of Syria, and that her object was to obtain possession of Egypt for herself. For some months it seemed as if war were inevitable between England and France, although there was

not, in reality, the slightest reason why the two States should quarrel. France was just as far away from any thought of a really disinterested foreign policy as England. England, on the other hand, had not the remotest idea of becoming the possessor of Egypt. Fortunately, Louis Philippe and M. Guizot were both strongly in favour of peace; M. Thiers resigned; and M. Guizot became Minister for Foreign Affairs, and virtually head of the Government. Thiers defended his policy in the French Chamber in a scream of passionate and almost hysterical declamation. Again and again he declared that his mind had been made up to go to war if England did not at once give way and modify the terms of the convention of July. It cannot be doubted that Thiers carried with him much of the excited public feeling of France. But the King and M. Guizot were happily supported by the majority in and out of the Chambers; and on July 13, 1841, the Treaty of London was signed, which provided for the settlement of the affairs of Egypt on the basis of the arrangement already made, and which contained, moreover, the stipulation, to be referred to more than once hereafter, by which the Sultan declared himself firmly resolved to maintain the ancient principle of his empire—that no foreign ship of war was to be admitted into the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, with the exception of light vessels for which a firman was granted.

The public of this country had taken but little interest in the controversy about Egypt, at least until it seemed likely to involve England in a war with France. Some of the episodes of the war were indeed looked upon with a certain satisfaction by people here at home. The bravery of Charles Napier, the hot-headed self-conceited commander, was enthusiastically extolled, and his feats of successful audacity were glorified as though they had shown the genius of a Nelson, or the clever resource of a Cochrane. Not many of Napier's admirers cared a rush about the merits of the quarrel between the Porte and the Pasha. Most of them would have been just as well pleased if Napier had been fighting for the Pasha and against the Porte; not a few were utterly ignorant as to whether he was fighting for Porte or for Pasha. Those who claimed to be more enlightened had a sort of general idea that it was in some way essential to the safety and glory of England that whenever Turkey was in trouble we should at once become her champions, tame her rebels, and conquer her enemies. Unfounded as were the suspicions of Frenchmen about our designs upon Egypt, they can hardly be called very unreasonable. Even a very cool and impartial Frenchman might be led to the conclusion that free England would not without some direct purpose of her own have pledged herself to the cause of a base and a decaying despotism.

Steadily meanwhile did the Ministry go from bad to worse. They

had greatly damaged their character by the manner in which they had again and again put up with defeat and consented to resume or retain office on any excuse or pretext. They were remarkably bad administrators; their finances were wretchedly managed. In later times we have come to regard the Tories as especially weak in the matter of finance. A well-managed revenue and a comfortable surplus are generally looked upon as in some way or other the monopoly of a Liberal administration; while lavish expenditure, deficit and increased taxation are counted among the necessary accompaniments of a Tory Government. So nearly does public opinion on both sides go to accepting these conditions, that there are many Tories who take it rather as a matter of pride that their leaders are not mean economists, and who regard a free-handed expenditure of the national revenue as something peculiarly gentlemanlike and in keeping with the honourable traditions of a great country party. But this was not the idea which prevailed in the days of the Melbourne Ministry. Then the universal conviction was that the Whigs were incapable of managing their finances. The budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Baring, showed a deficiency of nearly two millions. This deficiency he proposed to meet in part by alteration in the sugar duties; but the House of Commons, after a long debate, rejected his proposals by a majority of thirty-six. It was then expected, of course, that ministers would resign; but they were not yet willing to accept the consequences of defeat. They thought they had another stone in their sling. Lord John Russell had previously given notice of his intention to move for a committee of the whole House to consider the state of legislation with regard to the trade in corn; and he now brought forward an announcement of his plan, which was to propose a fixed duty of eight shillings per quarter on wheat, and proportionately diminished rates on rye, barley, and oats. Except for its effect on the fortunes of the Melbourne Ministry, there is not the slightest importance to be attached to this proposal. It was an experiment in the direction of the Free Traders, who were just beginning to be powerful; although they were not nearly strong enough yet to dictate the policy of a government. We shall have to tell the story of Free Trade hereafter; this present incident is no part of the history of a great movement; it is merely a small party dodge. It deceived no one. Lord Melbourne had always spoken with the uttermost contempt of the Free Trade agitation. With characteristic oaths, he had declared that of all the mad things he had ever heard suggested Free Trade was the maddest. Lord John Russell himself, although far more enlightened than the Prime Minister, had often condemned and sneered at the demand for Free Trade. The conversion of the ministers into the official advocates of a moderate

fixed duty was all too sudden for the conscience, for the very stomach of the nation. Public opinion would not endure it. Nothing but harm came to the Whigs from the attempt. Instead of any new adherents or fresh sympathy being won for them by their proposal, people only asked, 'Will nothing then turn them out of office? Will they never have done with trying new tricks to keep in place?'

Sir Robert Peel took, in homely phrase, the bull by the horns. He proposed a direct vote of want of confidence—a resolution declaring that ministers did not possess the confidence of the House sufficiently to enable them to carry through the measures which they deemed of essential importance to the public welfare, and that their continuance in office under such circumstances was at variance with the spirit of the Constitution. On June 4, 1841, the division was taken; and the vote of no-confidence was carried by a majority of one. Even the Whigs could not stand this. Lord Melbourne at last began to think that things were looking serious. Parliament was dissolved, and the result of the general election was that the Tories were found to have a majority even greater than they themselves had anticipated. The moment the new Parliament was assembled amendments to the address were carried in both Houses in a sense hostile to the Government. Lord Melbourne and his colleagues had to resign, and Sir Robert Peel was entrusted with the task of forming an administration.

We have not much more to do with Lord Melbourne in this history. He merely drops out of it. Between his expulsion from office and his death, which took place in 1848, he did little or nothing to call for the notice of anyone. It was said at one time that his closing years were lonesome and melancholy; but this has lately been denied, and indeed it is not likely that one who had such a genial temper and so many friends could have been left to the dreariness of a not self-sufficing solitude and to the bitterness of neglect. He was a generous and kindly man; his personal character, although often assailed, was free of any serious reproach; he was a failure in office, not so much from want of ability, as because he was a politician without convictions.

The Peel Ministry came into power with great hopes. It had Lord Lyndhurst for Lord Chancellor; Sir James Graham for Home Secretary; Lord Aberdeen at the Foreign Office; Lord Stanley was Colonial Secretary. The most remarkable man not in the Cabinet, soon to be one of the foremost statesmen in the country, was Mr. W. E. Gladstone. It is a fact of some significance in the history of the Peel administration, that the elections which brought the new Ministry into power brought Mr. Cobden for the first time into the House of Commons.

## CHAPTER X.

### MOVEMENTS IN THE CHURCHES.

While Lord Melbourne and his Whig colleagues, still in office, were fribbling away their popularity on the pleasant assumption that nobody was particularly in earnest about anything, the Vice-Chancellor and heads of houses held a meeting at Oxford and passed a censure on the celebrated 'No. 90,' of 'Tracts for the Times.' The movement, of which some important tendencies were formally censured in the condemnation of this tract, was one of the most momentous that had stirred the Church of England since the Reformation. The author of the tract was Dr. John Henry Newman, and the principal ground for its censure by voices claiming authority was the principle it seemed to put forward—that a man might honestly subscribe all the articles and formularies of the English Church, while yet holding many of the doctrines of the Church of Rome, against which those articles were regarded as a necessary protest. The great movement which was thus brought into sudden question and publicity was in itself an offspring of the immense stirring of thought which the French Revolution called up, and which had its softened echo in the English Reform Bill. The centre of the religious movement was to be found in the University of Oxford. When it is in the right, and when it is in the wrong, Oxford has always had more of the sentimental and of the poetic in its cast of thought than its rival or colleague of Cambridge. There were two influences then in operation over England, both of which alike aroused the alarm and the hostility of certain gifted and enthusiastic young Oxford men. One was the tendency to Rationalism drawn from the German theologians; the other was the manner in which the connection of the Church with the State in England was beginning to operate to the disadvantage of the Church as a sacred institution and teacher. The Reform party everywhere were assailing the rights and property of the Church. In Ireland especially experiments were made which every practical man will now regard with approval, whether he be churchman or not, but which seemed to the devoted ecclesiast of Oxford to be fraught with danger to the freedom and influence of the Church. Out of the contemplation of these dangers sprang the desire to revive the authority of the Church; to quicken her with a new vitality; to give her once again that place as guide and inspirer of the national life which her ardent votaries believed to be hers by right, and to have been forfeited

only by the carelessness of her authorities and their failure to fulfil the duties of her heaven-assigned mission.

No movement could well have had a purer source. None could have had more disinterested and high-minded promoters. It was borne in upon some earnest unresting souls, like that of the sweet and saintly Keble—souls 'without haste and without rest,' like Goethe's star—that the Church of England had higher duties and nobler claims than the business of preaching harmless sermons and the power of enriching bishops. Keble could not bear to think of the Church taking pleasure since all is well. He urged on some of the more vigorous and thoughtful minds around him, or rather he suggested it by his influence and his example, that they should reclaim for the Church the place which ought to be hers, as the true successor of the Apostles. He claimed for her that she, and she alone, was the real Catholic Church, and that Rome had wandered away from the right path, and foregone the glorious mission which she might have maintained. Among those who shared the spirit and purpose of Keble were Richard Hurrell Froude, the historian's elder brother, who gave rich promise of a splendid career, but who died while still in comparative youth; Dr. Pusey, afterwards leader of the school of ecclesiasticism which bears his name; and, most eminent of all, Dr. Newman. Keble had taken part in the publication of a series of treatises called 'Tracts for the Times,' the object of which was to vindicate the real mission, as the writers believed, of the Church of England. This was the Tractarian movement which had such various and memorable results. Newman first started the project of the Tracts, and wrote the most remarkable of them. He had up to this time been distinguished as one of the most unsparing enemies of Rome. At the same time he was, as he has himself said, 'fierce' against the 'instruments' and the 'manifestations' of 'the Liberal cause.' While he was at Algiers once a French vessel put in there, flying the tricolour; Newman would not even look at her. 'On my return, though forced to stop twenty-four hours at Paris, I kept indoors the whole time, and all that I saw of that beautiful city was what I saw from the diligence.' He had never had any manner of association with Roman Catholics; had, in fact, known singularly little of them. As Newman studied and wrote concerning the best way to restore the Church of England to her proper place in the national life, he kept the thought before him 'that there was something greater than the Established Church, and that that was the Church Catholic and Apostolic, set up from the beginning, of which she was but the local presence and the organ. She was nothing unless she was this. She must be dealt with strongly or she would be lost. There was need of a second Reformation.

At this time the idea of leaving the Church never, Dr. Newman himself assures us, had crossed his imagination. He felt alarmed for the Church between German Rationalism and man-of-the-world Liberalism. His fear was that the Church would sink to be the servile instrument of a State, and a Liberal State.

The abilities of Dr. Newman were hardly surpassed by any contemporary in any department of thought. His position and influence in Oxford were almost unique. There was in his intellectual temperament a curious combination of the mystic and the logical. He was at once a poetic dreamer and a sophist—in the true and not the corrupt and ungenerous sense of the latter word. It had often been said of him and of another great Englishman, that a change in their early conditions and training would easily have made of Newman a Stuart Mill, and of Mill a Newman. England in our time has hardly had a greater master of argument and of English prose than Newman. He is one of the keenest of dialecticians; and like Mill has the rare art that dissolves all the difficulties of the most abstruse or perplexed subject, and shows it bare and clear even to the least subtle of readers. His words dispel mists; and whether they who listen agree or not, they cannot fail to understand. A penetrating, poignant satirical humour is found in most of his writings; an irony sometimes piercing suddenly through it like a darting pain. On the other hand, a generous vein of poetry and of pathos informs his style; and there are many passages of his works in which he rises to the height of a genuine and noble eloquence.

In all the arts that make a great preacher or orator, Newman was strikingly deficient. His manner was constrained, ungraceful and even awkward; his voice was thin and weak. His bearing was not at first impressive in any way. A gaunt emaciated figure, a sharp and eagle face, a cold meditative eye rather repelled than attracted those who saw him for the first time. Singularly devoid of affectation, Newman did not always conceal his intellectual scorn of men who made loud pretence with inferior gifts, and the men must have been few indeed whose gifts were not inferior to his. Newman had no scorn for intellectual inferiority in itself; he despised it only when it gave itself airs. His influence while he was the vicar of St. Mary's at Oxford was profound. As Mr. Gladstone said of him in a recent speech, 'without ostentation or effort, but by simple excellence, he was continually drawing undergraduates more and more around him.' Mr. Gladstone in the same speech gave a description of Dr. Newman's pulpit style which is interesting: 'Dr. Newman's manner in the pulpit was one which, if you considered it in its separate parts, would lead you to arrive at very unsatisfactory conclusions. There was not very much change in the inflection of the voice; action there was

none; his sermons were read and his eyes were always on his book; and all that you will say is against efficiency in preaching. Yes; but you take the man as a whole, and there was a stamp and a seal upon him, there was a solemn music and sweetness in his tone, there was a completeness in the figure, taken together with the tone and with the manner, which made even his delivery such as I have described it, and though exclusively with written sermons, singularly attractive.' The stamp and seal were indeed those which are impressed by genius, piety and earnestness. No opponent ever spoke of Newman but with admiration for his intellect and respect for his character. Dr. Newman had a younger brother, Francis W. Newman, who also possessed remarkable ability and earnestness. He too was distinguished at Oxford and seemed to have a great career there before him. But he was drawn one way by the wave of thought before his more famous brother had been drawn the other way. In 1830, the younger Newman found himself prevented by religious scruples from subscribing the Thirty-nine Articles for his master's degree. He left the university, and wandered for years in the East, endeavouring, not very successfully perhaps, to teach Christianity on its broadest base to Mahometans; and then he came back to England to take his place among the leaders of a certain school of free thought. Fate had dealt with those brothers as with the two friends in Richter's story: it 'seized their bleeding hearts, and flung them different ways.'

When Dr. Newman wrote the famous Tract 'No. 90,' for which he was censured, he bowed to the authority of his bishop if not to that of the heads of houses; and he discontinued the publication of such treatises. But he did not admit any change of opinion; and indeed soon after he edited a publication called 'The British Critic,' in which many of the principles held to be exclusively those of the Church of Rome were enthusiastically claimed for the English Church. Yet a little and the gradual working of Newman's mind became evident to all the world. The brightest and most penetrating intellect in the Church of England was withdrawn from her service, and Newman went over to the Church of Rome. His secession was described by Mr. Disraeli a quarter of a century afterwards as having 'dealt a blow to the Church of England under which she still reels.' To this result had the inquiry conducted him which had led his friend Dr. Pusey merely to endeavour to incorporate some of the mysticism and the symbols of Rome with the ritual of the English Protestant Church; which had brought Keble only to seek a more liberal and truly Christian temper for the faith of the Protestant; and which had sent Francis Newman into Radicalism and Rationalism.

In truth, it is not difficult now to understand how the elder Newman's

mind became drawn towards the ancient Church which won him at last. We can see from his own candid account of his early sentiments how profoundly mystical was his intellectual nature, and how, long before he was conscious of any such tendency, he was drawn towards the very symbolisms of the Catholic Church. Pascal's early and unexplained mastery of mathematical problems which no one had taught him is not more suggestive in its way than those early drawings of Catholic symbols and devices which, done in his childhood, Newman says, surprised and were inexplicable to him when he came on them in years long after. No place could be better fitted to encourage and develop this tendency to mysticism in a thoughtful mind than Oxford, with all its noble memories of scholars and of priests; with its picturesque and poetic surroundings, and its never-fading mediævalism. Newman lived in the past. His spirit was with mediæval England. His thoughts were of a time when one Church took charge of the souls of a whole united devout people, and stood as the guide and authority appointed for them by Heaven. He thought of such a time until first he believed in it as a thing of the past, and next came to have faith in the possibility of its restoration as a thing of the present and the future. When once he had come to this point the rest followed, 'as by lot God wot.' No creature could for a moment suppose that that ideal Church was to be found in the English Establishment, submitted as it was to State-made doctrine, and to the decision of the Lord Chancellor, who might be an infidel or a free-liver. The question which Cardinal Manning tells us he asked himself years after at the time of the Gorham case must often have presented itself to the mind of Newman. Suppose all the Bishops of the Church of England should decide unanimously on any question of doctrine, would anyone receive the decision as infallible? Of course not. Such is not the genius or the principle of the English Church. The Church of England has no pretension to be considered the infallible guide of the people in matters even of doctrine. Were she seriously to put forward any such pretension, it would be rejected with contempt by the common mind of the nation. We are not discussing questions of dogma, or the rival claims of churches here; we are merely pointing out that to a man with Newman's idea of a church, the Church of England could not long afford a home. That very logical tendency, which in the mind of Newman as of that of Pascal contended for supremacy with the tendency to devotion and mysticism, only impelled him more rigorously on his way. He could not put up with compromises, and convince himself that he ought to be convinced. He dragged every compromise and every doctrine into the light, and insisted on knowing exactly what it amounted to and what it meant to say. The

doctrines and compromises of his own Church did not satisfy him. There are minds which in this condition of bewilderment might have been content to find 'no footing so solid as doubt.' Newman had not a mind of that class. He could not believe in a world without a church, or a church without what he held to be inspiration; and accordingly he threw his whole soul, energy, genius and fame into the cause of the Church of Rome.

This, however, did not come all at once. We are anticipating by a few years the passing over of Dr. Newman, Cardinal Manning and others to the ancient Church. It is clear that Newman was not himself conscious for a long time of the manner in which he was being drawn, surely although not quickly, in the direction of Rome. He used to be accused at one time of having remained a conscious Roman Catholic in the English Church, labouring to make new converts. Apart from his own calm assurances, and from the singularly pure and candid nature of the man, there are reasons enough to render such a charge absurd. Indeed, that simple and childish conception of human nature which assumes that a man must always see the logical consequences of certain admissions or inquiries beforehand, because all men can see them afterwards, is rather confusing and out of place when we are considering such a crisis of thought and feeling as that which took place in Oxford, and such men as those who were principally concerned in it. For the present, it is enough to say that the object of that movement was to raise the Church of England from apathy, from dull, easy-going acquiescence, from the perfunctory discharge of formal duties, and to quicken her again with the spirit of a priesthood, to arouse her to the living work, spiritual and physical, of an ecclesiastical sovereignty. The impulse overshot itself in some cases and was misdirected in others. It proved a failure on the whole as to its definite aims; and it sometimes left behind it only the ashes of a barren symbolism. But in its source it was generous, beneficent and noble, and it is hard to believe that there has not been throughout the Church of England on the whole a higher spirit at work since the famous Oxford movement began.

Still greater was the practical importance, at least in defined results, of the movement which went on in Scotland at about the same time. A fortnight before the decision of the heads of houses at Oxford on Dr. Newman's tract, Lord Aberdeen announced in the House of Lords that he did not see his way to do anything in particular with regard to the dissensions in the Church of Scotland. He had tried a measure, he said, the year before, and half the Church of Scotland liked it and the other half denounced it, and the Government opposed it; and he, there-

fore, had nothing further to suggest in the matter. The perplexity of Lord Aberdeen only faintly typified the perplexity of the Ministry. Lord Melbourne was about the last man in the world likely to have any sympathy with the spirit which animated the Scottish Reformers, or any notion of how to get out of the difficulty which the whole question presented. Differing as they did in so many other points, there was one central resemblance between the movement in the Kirk of Scotland and that which was going on in the Church of England. In both cases alike the effort of the reforming party was to emancipate the Church from the control of the State in matters involving religious doctrine and duty. In Scotland was soon to be presented the spectacle of a great secession from an Established Church, not because the seceders objected to the principle of a Church, but because they held that the Establishment was not faithful enough to its mission as a Church. One of the seceders pithily explained the position of the controversy when he said that he and his fellows were leaving the Kirk of Scotland, not because she was too 'churchy,' but because she was not 'churchy' enough.

The case was briefly this. During the reign of Queen Anne an Act was passed which took from the Church courts in Scotland the free choice as to the appointment of pastors, by subjecting the power of the presbytery to the control and interference of the law courts. Harley, Bolingbroke, and Swift, not one of whom cared a rush about the supposed sanctity of an ecclesiastical appointment, were the authors of this compromise, which was exactly of the kind that sensible men of the world everywhere might be supposed likely to accept and approve. In an immense number of Scotch parishes the minister was nominated by a lay patron; and if the presbytery found nothing to condemn in him as to 'life, literature and doctrine,' they were compelled to appoint him, however unwelcome he might be to the parishioners. Now it is obvious that a man might have a blameless character, sound religious views, and an excellent education, and nevertheless be totally unfitted to undertake the charge of a Scottish parish. The Southwark congregation who appreciate and delight in the ministrations of Mr. Spurgeon might very well be excused if they objected to having a perfectly moral Charles Honeyman, even though his religious opinions were identical with those of their favourite, forced upon them at the will of some aristocratic lay patron. The effect of the power conferred on the law courts and the patron was simply in a great number of cases to send families away from the Church of Scotland and into voluntaryism. The Scotch people are above all others impatient of any attempt to force on them the services of unacceptable ministers. Men clung to the National Church as long as it was national—that is, as long as it

represented and protected the sacred claims of a deeply religious people. Dissent, or rather voluntaryism, began to make a progress in Scotland that alarmed thoughtful churchmen. To get over the difficulty the General Assembly, the highest ecclesiastical court in Scotland, and likewise a sort of Church Parliament, declared that a veto on the nomination of the pastor should be exercised by the congregation, in accordance with a fundamental law of the Church that no pastor should be intruded on any congregation contrary to the will of the people. The Veto Act, as this declaration was called, worked well enough for a short time, and the highest legal authorities declared it not incompatible with the Act of Queen Anne. But it diminished far too seriously the power of the lay patron to be accepted without a struggle. In the celebrated Auchterarder case the patron won a victory over the Church in the courts of law, for having presented a minister whose appointment was vetoed by the congregation; he obtained an order from the civil courts deciding that the presbytery must take him on trial, in obedience with the Act of Queen Anne, as he was qualified by life, literature, and doctrine. This question, however, was easily settled by the General Assembly of the Church. They left to the patron's nominee his stipend and his house, and took no further notice of him. They did not recognise him as one of their pastors, but he might have, if he would, the manse and the money which the civil courts had declared to be his. They merely appealed to the Legislature to do something which might make the civil law in harmony with the principles of the Church. A more serious question, however, presently arose. This was the famous Strathbogie case, which brought the authority of the Church and that of the State into irreconcilable conflict. A minister had been nominated in the parish of Marnoch who was so unacceptable to the congregation that 261 out of 300 heads of families objected to his appointment. The General Assembly directed the presbytery of Strathbogie, in which the parish lay, to reject the minister, Mr. Edwards. The presbytery had long been noted for its leaning towards the claims of the civil power, and it very reluctantly obeyed the command of the highest authority and ruling body of the Church. Another minister was appointed to the parish. Mr. Edwards fought the question out in the civil court and obtained an interdict against the new appointment, and a decision that the presbytery were bound to take himself on trial. Seven members constituting the majority of the presbytery determined, without consulting the General Assembly, to obey the civil power, and they admitted Mr. Edwards on trial. The seven were brought before the bar of the General Assembly, and by an overwhelming majority were condemned to be deposed from their places in the ministry. Their

parishes were declared vacant. A more complete antagonism between Church and State is not possible to imagine. The Church expelled from its ministry seven men for having obeyed the command of the civil laws.

It was on the motion of Dr. Chalmers that the seven ministers were deposed. Dr. Chalmers became the leader of the movement which was destined within two years from the time we are now surveying to cause the disruption of the ancient Kirk of Scotland. No man could be better fitted for the task of leadership in such a movement. He was beyond comparison the foremost man in the Scottish Church. He was the greatest pulpit orator in Scotland, or, indeed, in Great Britain. As a scientific writer, both on astronomy and on political economy, he had made a great mark. From having been in his earlier days the minister of an obscure Scottish village congregation, he had suddenly sprung into fame. He was the lion of any city which he happened to visit. If he preached in London, the church was crowded with the leaders of politics, science and fashion, eager to hear him. The effect he produced in England is all the more surprising seeing that he spoke in the broadest Scottish accent conceivable, and, as one admirer admits, mispronounced almost every word. We have already quoted what Mr. Gladstone said about the style of Dr. Newman; let us cite also what he says about Dr. Chalmers. 'I have heard,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'Dr. Chalmers preach and lecture. Being a man of Scotch blood, I am very much attached to Scotland, and like even the Scotch accent; but not the Scotch accent of Dr. Chalmers. Undoubtedly the accent of Dr. Chalmers in preaching and delivery was a considerable impediment to his success; but, notwithstanding all that, it was overborne by the power of the man in preaching—overborne by his power, which melted into harmony with all the adjuncts and incidents of the man as a whole, so much so, that although I would have said that the accent of Dr. Chalmers was distasteful, yet in Dr. Chalmers himself I would not have had it altered in the smallest degree.' Chalmers spoke with a massive eloquence in keeping with his powerful frame and his broad brow and his commanding presence. His speeches were a strenuous blending of argument and emotion. They appealed at once to the strong common sense and to the deep religious convictions of his Scottish audiences. His whole soul was in his work as a leader of religious movements. He cared little or nothing for any popularity or fame that he might have won. Some strong and characteristic words of his own have told us what he thought of passing renown. He called it 'a popularity which rifles home of its sweets; and by elevating a man above his fellows places him in a region of desolation, where he stands a conspicuous mark for the shafts of malice, envy and detraction; a popularity which, with its head among storms and

its feet on the treacherous quicksands, has nothing to lull the agonies of its tottering existence but the Hosannahs of a drivelling generation.' There is no reason to doubt that these were Chalmers's genuine sentiments; and scarcely any man of his time had come into so sudden and great an endowment of popularity. The reader of to-day must not look for adequate illustration of the genius and the influence of Chalmers in his published works. These do indeed show him to have been a strong reasoner and a man of original mind. But they do not show the Chalmers of Scottish controversy. That Chalmers must be studied through the traces, lying all around, of his influence upon the mind and the history of the Scottish people. The Free Church of Scotland is his monument. He did not make that Church. It was not the work of one man, or, strictly speaking, of one generation. It grew naturally out of the inevitable struggle between Church and State. But Chalmers did more than any other man to decide the moment and the manner of its coming into existence, and its success is his best monument.

For we may anticipate a little, in this instance as in that of the Oxford movement, and mention at once the fact that on May 18, 1843, some five hundred ministers of the Church of Scotland, under the leadership of Dr. Chalmers, seceded from the old Kirk and set about to form the Free Church. The government of Sir Robert Peel had made a weak effort at compromise by legislative enactment, but had declined to introduce any legislation which should free the Kirk of Scotland from the control of the civil courts, and there was no course for those who held the views of Dr. Chalmers but to withdraw from the Church which admitted that claim of State control. Opinions may differ as to the necessity, the propriety of the secession—as to its effects upon the history and the character of the Scottish people since that time; but there can be no difference of opinion as to the spirit of self-sacrifice in which the step was taken. Five hundred ministers on that memorable day went deliberately forth from their positions of comfort and honour, from home and competence, to meet an uncertain and a perilous future, with perhaps poverty and failure to be the final result of their enterprise, and with misconstruction and misrepresentation to make the bitter bread of poverty more bitter still. In these pages we have nothing to do with the merits of religious controversies; and it is no part of our concern to consider even the social and political effects produced upon Scotland by this great secession. But we need not withhold our admiration from the men who risked and suffered so much in the cause of what they believed to be their Church's true rights; and we are bound to give this admiration as cordially to the poor and nameless ministers, the men of the rank and file, about whose doings history so little concerns herself, as

to the leaders like Chalmers, who, whether they sought it or not, found fame shining on their path of self-sacrifice. The history of Scotland is illustrated by many great national deeds. No deed it tells of surpasses in dignity and in moral grandeur that secession—to cite the words of the protest—'from an Establishment which we loved and prized, through interference with conscience, the dishonour done to Christ's crown, and the rejection of his sole and supreme authority as King in his Church.'

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE DISASTERS OF CABUL.

THE earliest days of the Peel Ministry fell upon trouble, not indeed at home, but abroad. At home the prospect still seemed bright. The birth of the Queen's eldest son was an event welcomed by national congratulation. There was still great distress in the agricultural districts; but there was a general confidence that the financial genius of Peel would quickly find some way to make burdens light, and that the condition of things all over the country would begin to mend. It was a region far removed from the knowledge and the thoughts of most Englishmen that supplied the news now beginning to come into England day after day, and to thrill the country with the tale of one of the greatest disasters to English policy and English arms to be found in all the record of our dealings with the East. There are many still living who can recall with an impression as keen as though it belonged to yesterday the first accounts that reached this country of the surrender at Cabul, and the gradual extinction of the army that tried to make its retreat through the terrible Pass.

This grim chapter of history had been for some time in preparation. It may be said to open with the reign itself. News travelled slowly then; and it was quite in the ordinary course of things that some part of the empire might be torn with convulsion for months before London knew that the even and ordinary condition of things had been disturbed. In this instance, the rejoicings at the accession of the young Queen were still going on when a series of events had begun in Central Asia destined to excite the profoundest emotion in England, and to exercise the most powerful influence upon our foreign policy down to the present hour. On September 20, 1837, Captain Alexander Burnes arrived at Cabul, the capital of the state of Cabul, in the north of Afghanistan, and the ancient capital of the Emperor Baber, whose tomb is on a hill outside the city,

Burnes was a famous orientalist and traveller, the Burton or Burnaby of his day; he had conducted an expedition into Central Asia; had published his travels in Bokhara, and had been sent on a mission by the Indian Government, in whose service he was to study the navigation of the Indus. He was, it may be remarked, a member of the family of Robert Burns, the poet himself having changed the original spelling of the name which all the other members of the family retained. The object of the journey of Captain Burnes to Cabul in 1837 was in the first instance to enter into commercial relations with Dost Mahomed, then ruler of Cabul, and with other chiefs of the western regions. But events soon changed his business from a commercial into a political and diplomatic mission; and his tragic fate would make his journey memorable to Englishmen for ever, even if other events had not grown out of it which give it a place of more than personal importance in history.

The great region of Afghanistan, with its historical boundaries as varying and difficult to fix at certain times as those of the old Dukedom of Burgundy, has been called the land of transition between Eastern and Western Asia. All the great ways that lead from Persia to India pass through that region. There is a proverb which declares that no one can be king of Hindostan without first becoming lord of Cabul. The Afghans are the ruling nation, but among them had long been settled Hindoos, Arabs, Armenians, Abyssinians, and men of other races and religions. The Afghans are Mahometans of the Shunite sect, but they allowed Hindoos, Christians, and even the Persians, who are of the hated dissenting sect of the Shiites, to live among them, and even to rise to high position and influence The founder of the Afghan empire, Ahmed Shah, died in 1773. He had made an empire which stretched from Herat on the west to Sirhind on the east, and from the Oxus and Cashmere on the north to the Arabian Sea and the mouth of the Indus on the south. The death of his son, Timur Shah, delivered the kingdom up to the hostile factions, intrigues, and quarrels of his sons; the leaders of a powerful tribe, the Barukzyes, took advantage of the events that arose out of this condition of things to dethrone the descendants of Ahmed Shah. When Captain Burnes visited Afghanistan in 1832, the only part of all their great inheritance which yet remained with the descendants of Ahmed Shah was the principality of Herat. The remainder of Afghanistan was parcelled out between Dost Mahomed and his brothers. Dost Mahomed was a man of extraordinary ability and energy. He would probably have made a name as a soldier and a statesman anywhere. He had led a stormy youth, but had put away with maturity and responsibility the vices and follies of his earlier years. There seems no reason to doubt that although

he was a usurper he was a sincere lover of his country, and on the whole a wise and just ruler. When Captain Burnes visited Dost Mahomed, he was received with every mark of friendship and favour. Dost Mahomed professed to be, and no doubt at one time was, a sincere friend of the English Government and people. There was, however, at that time a quarrel going on between the Shah of Persia and the Prince of Herat, the last enthroned representative, as has been already said, of the great family on whose fall Dost Mahomed and his brothers had mounted into power. So far as can now be judged, there does seem to have been serious and genuine ground of complaint on the part of Persia against the ruler of Herat. But it is probable too that the Persian Shah had been seeking for, and in any case, would have found, a pretext for making war; and the strong impression at the time in England, and among the authorities in India, was that Persia herself was but a puppet in the hands of Russia. A glance at the map will show the meaning of this suspicion and the reasons which at once gave it plausibility, and would have rendered it of grave importance. If Persia were merely the instrument of Russia, and if the troops of the Shah were only the advance guard of the Czar, then undoubtedly the attack on Herat might have been regarded as the first step of a great movement of Russia towards our Indian dominion.

There were other reasons, too, to give this suspicion some plausibility. Mysterious agents of Russia, officers in her service and others, began to show themselves in Central Asia at the time of Captain Burnes's visit to Dost Mahomed. Undoubtedly, Russia did set herself for some reason to win the friendship and alliance of Dost Mahomed; and Captain Burnes was for his part engaged in the same endeavour. All considerations of a merely commercial nature had long since been put away, and Burnes was freely and earnestly negotiating with Dost Mahomed for his alliance. Burnes always insisted that Dost Mahomed himself was sincerely anxious to become an ally of England, and that he offered more than once on his own free part to dismiss the Russian agents even without seeing them, if Burnes desired him to do so. But for some reason Burnes's superiors did not share his confidence. In Downing Street and in Simla the profoundest distrust of Dost Mahomed prevailed. It was again and again impressed on Burnes that he must regard Dost Mahomed as a treacherous enemy and as a man playing the part of Persia and of Russia. It is impossible now to estimate fairly all the reasons which may have justified the English and the Indian Governments in this conviction. But we know that nothing in the policy afterwards followed out by the Indian authorities exhibited any of the judgment and wisdom that would warrant us in taking anything for granted on the mere faith of their dictum. The story of four years—almost to a day the extent

of this sad chapter of English history—will be a tale of such misfortune, blunder and humiliation as the annals of England do not anywhere else present. Blunders which were indeed worse than crimes, and a principle of action which it is a crime in any rulers to sanction, brought things to such a pass with us that in a few years from the accession of the Queen we had in Afghanistan soldiers who were positively afraid to fight the enemy, and some English officials who were not ashamed to treat for the removal of our most formidable foes by purchased assassination. It is a good thing for us all to read in cold blood this chapter of our history. It will teach us how vain is a policy founded on evil and ignoble principles; how vain is the strength and courage of men when they have not leaders fit to command. It may teach us also not to be too severe in our criticism of other nations. The failure of the French invasion of Mexico under the Second Empire seems like glory when compared with the failure of our attempt to impose a hated sovereign on the Afghan people.

Captain Burnes then was placed in the painful difficulty of having to carry out a policy of which he entirely disapproved. He believed in Dost Mahomed as a friend, and he was ordered to regard him as an enemy. It would have been better for the career and for the reputation of Burnes if he had simply declined to have anything to do with a course of action which seemed to him at once unjust and unwise. But Burnes was a young man, full of youth's energy and ambition. He thought he saw a career of distinction opening before him, and he was unwilling to close it abruptly by setting himself in obstinate opposition to his superiors. He was, besides, of a quick mercurial temperament, over which mood followed mood in rapid succession of change. A slight contradiction sometimes threw him into momentary despondency; a gleam of hope elated him into the assurance that all was won. It is probable that after a while he may have persuaded himself to acquiesce in the judgment of his chiefs. On the other hand, Dost Mahomed was placed in a position of great difficulty and danger. He had to choose. He could not remain absolutely independent of all the disputants. If England would not support him, he must for his own safety find alliances elsewhere; in Russian statecraft, for example. He told Burnes of this again and again, and Burnes endeavoured without the slightest success to impress his superiors with his own views as to the reasonableness of Dost Mahomed's arguments. Runjeet Singh, the daring and successful adventurer who had annexed the whole province of Cashmere to his dominions, was the enemy of Dost Mahomed and the faithful ally of England. Dost Mahomed thought the British Government could assist him in coming to terms with Runjeet Singh, and Burnes had assured him that the British Government would do all it could to establish satisfactory

terms of peace between Afghanistan and the Punjaub, over which Runjeet Singh ruled. Burnes wrote from Cabul to say that Russia had made substantial offers to Dost Mahomed; Persia had been lavish in her biddings for his alliance; Bokhara and other states had not been backward; 'yet in all that has passed, or is daily transpiring, the chief of Cabul declares that he prefers the sympathy and friendly offices of the British to all these offers, however alluring they may seem, from Persia or from the Emperor; which places his good sense in a light more than prominent, and in my humble judgment proves that by an earlier attention to these countries we might have escaped the whole of these intrigues and held long since a stable influence in Cabul.' Burnes, however, was unable to impress his superiors with any belief either in Dost Mahomed or in the policy which he himself advocated, and the result was that Lord Auckland, the Governor-General of India, at length resolved to treat Dost Mahomed as an enemy and to drive him from Cabul. Lord Auckland, therefore, entered into a treaty with Runjeet Sing and Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk, the exiled representative of what we may call the legitimist rulers of Afghanistan, for the restoration of the latter to the throne of his ancestors, and for the destruction of the power of Dost Mahomed.

It ought to be a waste of time to enter into any argument in condemnation of such a policy in our days. Even if its results had not proved in this particular instance its most striking and exemplary condemnation, it is so grossly and flagrantly opposed to all the principles of our more modern statesmanship that no one among us ought now to need a warning against it. Dost Mahomed was the accepted, popular and successful ruler of Cabul. No matter what our quarrel with him, we had not the slightest right to make it an excuse for forcing on his people a ruler whom they had proved before, as they were soon to prove again, that they thoroughly detested. Perhaps the nearest parallel to our policy in this instance is to be found in the French invasion of Mexico, and the disastrous attempt to impose a foreign ruler on the Mexican people. Each experiment ended in utter failure, and the miserable death of the unfortunate puppet prince who was put forward as the figure-head of the enterprise. But the French Emperor could at least have pleaded in his defence that Maximilian of Austria had not already been tried and rejected by the Mexican people. Our *protégé* had been tried and rejected. The French Emperor might have pleaded that he had actual and substantial wrongs to avenge. We had only problematical and possible dangers to guard against. In any case, as has been already said, the calamities entailed on French arms and counsels by the Mexican intervention read like a page of brilliant success when compared with the immediate result of our enterprise in Cabul.

Before passing away from this part of the subject, it is necessary to mention the fact that among its many unfortunate incidents the campaign led to some peculiarly humiliating debates and some lamentable accusations in the House of Commons. Years after Burnes had been flung into his bloody grave, it was found that the English Government had presented to the House of Commons his despatches in so mutilated and altered a form, that Burnes was made to seem as if he actually approved and recommended the policy which he especially warned us to avoid. It is painful to have to record such a fact, but it is indispensable that it should be recorded. It would be vain to attempt to explain how the principles and the honour of English statemanship fell for the hour under the demoralising influence which allowed such things to be thought legitimate. An Oriental atmosphere seemed to have gathered around our official leaders. In Afghanistan they were entering into secret and treacherous treaties; in England they were garbling despatches. When years after Lord Palmerston was called upon to defend the policy which had thus dealt with the despatches of Alexander Burnes, he did not say that the documents were not garbled. He only contended that as the Government had determined not to act on the advice of Burnes, they were in no wise bound to publish those passages of his despatches in which he set forth assumptions which they believed to be unfounded, and advised a policy which they looked upon as mistaken. Such a defence is only to be read with wonder and pain. The Government was not accused of suppressing passages which they believed rightly or wrongly to be worthless. The accusation was, that by suppressing passages and sentences here and there, Burnes was made to appear as if he were actually recommending the policy against which he was at the time most earnestly protesting. Burnes was himself the first victim of the policy which he strove against, and which all England has since condemned. No severer word is needed to condemn the mutilation of his despatches than to say that he was actually made to stand before the country as responsible for having recommended that very policy. 'It should never be forgotten,' says Sir J. W. Kaye, the historian of the Afghan War, 'by those who would form a correct estimate of the character and career of Alexander Burnes, that both have been misrepresented in those collections of State papers which are supposed to furnish the best materials of history, but which are often in reality only one-sided compilations of garbled documents—counterfeits, which the ministerial stamp forces into currency, defrauding a present generation, and handing down to posterity a chain of dangerous lies.'

Meanwhile the Persian attack on Herat had practically failed, owing mainly to the skill and spirit of a young English officer, Eldred Pottinger,

who was assisting the prince in his resistance to the troops of the Persian Shah. Lord Auckland, however, ordered the assemblage of a British force for service across the Indus, and issued a famous manifesto, dated from Simla, October 1, 1838, in which he set forth the motives of his policy. The Governor-General stated that Dost Mahomed had made a sudden and unprovoked attack upon our ancient ally, Runjeet Singh, and that when the Persian army was besieging Herat, Dost Mahomed was giving undisguised support to the designs of Persia. The chiefs of Candahar, the brothers of Dost Mahomed, had also, Lord Auckland declared, given in their adherence to the plans of Persia. Great Britain regarded the advance of Persian arms in Afghanistan as an act of hostility towards herself. The Governor-General had, therefore, resolved to support the claims of the Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk, whose dominions had been usurped by the existing rulers of Cabul, and who had found an honourable asylum in British territory; and 'whose popularity throughout Afghanistan'—Lord Auckland wrote in words that must afterwards have read like the keenest and cruelest satire upon his policy—'had been proved to his Lordship by the strong and unanimous testimony of the best authorities.' This popular sovereign, this favourite of his people, was at the time living in exile, without the faintest hope of ever again being restored to his dominions. We pulled the poor man out of his obscurity, told him that his people were yearning for him, and that we would set him on his throne once more. We entered for the purpose into the tripartite treaty already mentioned. Mr. (afterwards Sir W. H.) Macnaghten, Secretary to the Government of India, was appointed to be envoy and minister at the court of Shah Soojah; and Sir Alexander Burnes (who had been recalled from the court of Dost Mahomed and rewarded with a title for giving the advice which his superiors thought absurd) was deputed to act under his direction. It is only right to say that the policy of Lord Auckland had the entire approval of the British Government. It was afterwards stated in Parliament on the part of the Ministry that a despatch recommending to Lord Auckland exactly such a course as he pursued crossed on the way his despatch announcing to the Government at home that he had already undertaken the enterprise.

We conquered Dost Mahomed and dethroned him. He made a bold and brilliant, sometimes even a splendid resistance. We took Ghuznee by blowing up one of its gates with bags of gunpowder, and thus admitting the rush of a storming party. It was defended by one of the sons of Dost Mahomed, who became our prisoner. We took Jellalabad, which was defended by Akbar Khan, another of Dost Mahomed's sons, whose name came afterwards to have a hateful sound in all English ears. As we

approached Cabul, Dost Mahomed abandoned his capital and fled with a few horsemen across the Indus. Shah Soojah entered Cabul accompanied by the British officers. It was to have been a triumphal entry. The hearts of those who believed in his cause must have sunk within them when they saw how the Shah was received by the people who, Lord Auckland was assured, were so devoted to him. The city received him in sullen silence. Few of its people condescended even to turn out to see him as he passed. The vast majority stayed away and disdained even to look at him. One would have thought that the least observant eye must have seen that his throne could not last a moment longer than the time during which the strength of Britain was willing to support it. The British army, however, withdrew, leaving only a contingent of some eight thousand men, besides the Shah's own hirelings, to maintain him for the present. Sir W. Macnaghten seems to have really believed that the work was done, and that Shah Soojah was as safe on his throne as Queen Victoria. He was destined to be very soon and very cruelly undeceived.

Dost Mahomed made more than one effort to regain his place. He invaded Shah Soojah's dominions, and met the combined forces of the Shah and their English ally in more than one battle. On November 2, 1840, he won the admiration of the English themselves by the brilliant stand he made against them. With his Afghan horse he drove our cavalry before him, and forced them to seek the shelter of the British guns. The native troopers would not stand against him: they fled and left their English officers, who vainly tried to rally them. In this battle of Purwandurrah victory might not unreasonably have been claimed for Dost Mahomed. He won at least his part of the battle. No tongues have praised him louder than those of English historians. But Dost Mahomed had the wisdom of a statesman as well as the genius of a soldier. He knew well that he could not hold out against the strength of England. A savage or semi-barbarous chieftain is easily puffed up by a seeming triumph over a great Power, and is led to his destruction by the vain hope that he can hold out against it to the last. Dost Mahomed had no such ignorant and idle notion. Perhaps he knew well enough too that time was wholly on his side; that he had only to wait and see the sovereignty of Shah Soojah tumble into pieces. The evening after his brilliant exploit in the field Dost Mahomed rode quietly up to the quarters of Sir W. Macnaghten, met the envoy, who was returning from an evening ride, and to Macnaghten's utter amazement announced himself as Dost Mahomed, tendered to the envoy the sword that had flashed so splendidly across the field of the previous day's fight and surrendered himself a prisoner. His sword was returned; he was treated with all honour; and a few days afterwards he was sent to India, where a residence and a revenue were assigned to him.

But the withdrawal of Dost Mahomed from the scene did nothing to secure the reign of the unfortunate Shah Soojah. The Shah was hated on his own account. He was regarded as a traitor who had sold his country to the foreigners. Insurrections began to be chronic. They were going on in the very midst of Cabul itself. Sir W. Macnaghten was warned of danger, but seemed to take no heed. Some fatal blindness appears to have suddenly fallen on the eyes of our people in Cabul. On November 2, 1841, an insurrection broke out. Sir Alexander Burnes lived in the city itself; Sir W. Macnaghten and the military commander, Major-General Elphinstone, were in cantonments at some little distance. The insurrection might have been put down in the first instance with hardly the need even of Napoleon's famous 'whiff of grapeshot.' But it was allowed to grow up without attempt at control. Sir Alexander Burnes could not be got to believe that it was anything serious even when a fanatical and furious mob were besieging his own house. The fanatics were especially bitter against Burnes, because they believed that he had been guilty of treachery. They accused him of having pretended to be the friend of Dost Mahomed, deceived him, and brought the English into the country. How entirely innocent of this charge Burnes was we all now know; but it would be idle to deny that there was much in the external aspect of events to excuse such a suspicion in the mind of an infuriated Afghan. To the last Burnes refused to believe that he was in danger. He had always been a friend to the Afghans, he said, and he could have nothing to fear. It was true. He had always been the sincere friend of the Afghans. It was his misfortune, and the heavy fault of his superiors, that he had been made to appear as an enemy of the Afghans. He had now to pay a heavy penalty for the errors and the wrong-doing of others. He harangued the raging mob and endeavoured to bring them to reason. He does not seem to have understood up to the very last moment that by reminding them that he was Alexander Burnes, their old friend, he was only giving them a new reason for demanding his life. He was murdered in the tumult. He and his brother and all those with them were hacked to pieces with Afghan knives. He was only in his thirty-seventh year when he was murdered. He was the first victim of the policy which had resolved to intervene in the affairs of Afghanistan. Fate seldom showed with more strange and bitter malice her proverbial irony than when she made him the first victim of the policy adopted in despite of his best advice and his strongest warnings.

The murder of Burnes was not a climax; it was only a beginning. The English troops were quartered in cantonments outside the city, and at some little distance from it. These cantonments were in any case of real

difficulty practically indefensible. The popular monarch, the darling of his people, whom we had restored to his throne, was in the Bala Hissar, or citadel of Cabul. From the moment when the insurrection broke out he may be regarded as a prisoner or a besieged man there. He was as utterly unable to help our people as they were to help him. The whole country threw itself into insurrection against him and us. The Afghans attacked the cantonments and actually compelled the English to abandon the forts in which all our commissariat was stored. We were thus threatened with famine even if we could resist the enemy in arms. We were strangely unfortunate in our civil and military leaders. Sir W. Macnaghten was a man of high character and good purpose, but he was weak and credulous. The commander, General Elphinstone, was old, infirm, tortured by disease, broken down both in mind and body, incapable of forming a purpose of his own, or of holding to one suggested by anybody else. His second in command was a far stronger and abler man; but unhappily the two could never agree. 'They were both of them,' says Sir J. W. Kaye, 'brave men. In any other situation, though the physical infirmities of the one and the cankered vanity, the dogmatical perverseness of the other, might have in some measure detracted from their efficiency as military commanders, I believe they would have exhibited sufficient courage and constancy to rescue an army from utter destruction, and the British name from indelible reproach. But in the Cabul cantonments they were miserably out of place. They seem to have been sent there by superhuman intervention, to work out the utter ruin and prostration of an unholy policy by ordinary human means.' One fact must be mentioned by an English historian; one which an English historian has happily not often to record. It is certain that an officer in our service entered into negotiations for the murder of the insurgent chiefs who were our worst enemies. It is more than probable that he believed in doing so he was acting as Sir W. Macnaghten would have had him do. Sir W. Macnaghten was innocent of any complicity in such a plot, and was incapable of it. But the negotiations were opened and carried on in his name.

A new figure appeared on the scene, a dark and a fierce apparition. This was Akbar Khan, the favourite son of Dost Mahomed. He was a daring, a clever, an unscrupulous young man. From the moment when he entered Cabul he became the real leader of the insurrection against Shah Soojah and us. Macnaghten, persuaded by the military commander that the position of things was hopeless, consented to enter into negotiations with Akbar Khan. Before the arrival of the latter the chiefs of the insurrection had offered us terms which made the ears of our envoy tingle

Such terms had not often been even suggested to British soldiers before. They were simply unconditional surrender. Macnaghten indignantly rejected them. Everything went wrong with him, however. We were beaten again and again by the Afghans. Our officers never faltered in their duty; but the melancholy truth has to be told that the men, most of whom were Asiatics, at last began to lose heart and would not fight the enemy. So the envoy was compelled to enter into terms with Akbar Khan and the other chiefs. Akbar Khan received him at first with contemptuous insolence—as a haughty conqueror receives some ignoble and humiliated adversary. It was agreed that the British troops should quit Afghanistan at once; that Dost Mahomed and his family should be sent back to Afghanistan; that on his return the unfortunate Shah Soojah should be allowed to take himself off to India or where he would; and that some British officers should be left at Cabul as hostages for the fulfilment of the conditions.

The evacuation did not take place at once, although the fierce winter was setting in, and the snow was falling heavily, ominously. Macnaghten seems to have had still some lingering hopes that something would turn up to relieve him from the shame of quitting the country; and it must be owned that he does not seem to have had any intention of carrying out the terms of the agreement if by any chance he could escape from them. On both sides there were dallyings and delays. At last Akbar Khan made a new and startling proposition to our envoy. It was that they two should enter into a secret treaty, should unite their arms against the other chiefs, and should keep Shah Soojah on the throne as nominal king, with Akbar Khan as his vizier. Macnaghten caught at the proposals. He had entered into terms of negotiation with the Afghan chiefs together; he now consented to enter into a secret treaty with one of the chiefs to turn their joint arms against the others. It would be idle and shameful to attempt to defend such a policy. We can only excuse it by considering the terrible circumstances of Macnaghten's position; the manner in which his nerves and moral fibre had been shaken and shattered by calamities; and his doubts whether he could place any reliance on the promises of the chiefs. He had apparently sunk into that condition of mind which Macaulay tells us that Clive adopted so readily in his dealings with Asiatics, and under the influence of which men naturally honourable and high-minded come to believe that it is right to act treacherously with those whom we believe to be treacherous. All this is but excuse, and rather poor excuse. When it has all been said and thought of, we must still be glad to believe that there are not many Englishmen who would, under any circumstances, have consented even to give a hearing to the proposals of Akbar Khan.

Whatever Macnaghten's error, it was dearly expiated. He went out at noon next day to confer with Akbar Khan on the banks of the neighbouring river. Three of his officers were with him. Akbar Khan was ominously surrounded by friends and retainers. These kept pressing round the unfortunate envoy. Some remonstrance was made by one of the English officers, but Akbar Khan said it was of no consequence, as they were all in the secret. Not many words were spoken; the expected conference had hardly begun when a signal was given or an order issued by Akbar Khan, and the envoy and the officers were suddenly seized from behind. A scene of wild confusion followed, in which hardly anything is clear and certain but the one most horrible incident. The envoy struggled with Akbar Khan, who had himself seized Macnaghten; Akbar Khan drew from his belt one of a pair of pistols which Macnaghten had presented to him a short time before and shot him through the body. The fanatics who were crowding round hacked the body to pieces with their knives. Of the three officers one was killed on the spot; the other two were forced to mount Afghan horses and carried away as prisoners.

At first this horrible deed of treachery and blood shows like that to which Clearchus and his companions, the chiefs of the famous ten thousand Greeks, fell victims at the hands of Tissaphernes, the Persian satrap. But it seems certain that the treachery of Akbar, base as it was, did not contemplate more than the seizure of the envoy and his officers. There were jealousies and disputes among the chiefs of the insurrection. One of them in especial had got his mind filled with the conviction, inspired no doubt by the unfortunate and unparalleled negotiation already mentioned, that the envoy had offered a price for his head. Akbar Khan was accused by him of being a secret friend of the envoy and the English. Akbar Khan's father was a captive in the hands of the English, and it may have been thought that on his account and for personal purposes Akbar was favouring the envoy and even intriguing with him. Akbar offered to prove his sincerity by making the envoy a captive and handing him over to the chiefs. This was the treacherous plot which he strove to carry out by entering into the secret negotiations with the easily-deluded envoy. On the fatal day the latter resisted and struggled; Akbar Khan heard a cry of alarm that the English soldiers were coming out of cantonments to rescue the envoy; and, wild with passion, he suddenly drew his pistol and fired. This was the statement made again and again by Akbar Khan himself. It does not seem an improbable explanation for what otherwise looks a murder as stupid and purposeless as it was brutal. The explanation does not much relieve the darkness of Akbar Khan's character. It is given here as history, not as exculpation. There is not the slightest reason to suppose that

Akbar Khan would have shrunk from any treachery or any cruelty which served his purpose. His own explanation of his purpose in this instance shows a degree of treachery which could hardly be surpassed even in the East. But it is well to bear in mind that the suspicions of perfidy under which the English envoy laboured, and which was the main impulse of Akbar Khan's movement, had evidence enough to support it in the eyes of suspicious enemies; and that poor Macnaghten would not have been murdered had he not consented to meet Akbar Khan and treat with him on a proposition to which an English official should never have listened.

A terrible agony of suspense followed among the little English force in the cantonments. The military chiefs afterwards stated that they did not know until the following day that any calamity had befallen the envoy. But a keen suspicion ran through the cantonments that some fearful deed had been done. No step was taken to avenge the death of Macnaghten even when it became known that his hacked and mangled body had been exhibited in triumph all through the streets and bazaars of Cabul. A paralysis seemed to have fallen over the councils of our military chiefs. On December 24, 1841, came a letter from one of the officers seized by Akbar Khan, accompanying proposals for a treaty from the Afghan chiefs. It is hard now to understand how any English officers could have consented to enter into terms with the murderers of Macnaghten before his mangled body could well have ceased to bleed. It is strange that it did not occur to most of them that there was an alternative; that they were not ordered by fate to accept whatever the conquerors chose to offer. We can all see the difficulty of their position. General Elphinstone and his second in command, Brigadier Shelton, were convinced that it would be equally impossible to stay where they were or to cut their way through the Afghans. But it might have occurred to many that they were nevertheless not bound to treat with the Afghans. They might have remembered the famous answer of the father in Corneille's immortal drama, who is asked what his son could have done but yield in the face of such odds, and exclaims in generous passion that he could have died. One English officer of mark did counsel his superiors in this spirit. This was Major Eldred Pottinger, whose skill and courage in the defence of Herat we have already mentioned. Pottinger was for cutting their way through all enemies and difficulties as far as they could, and then occupying the ground with their dead bodies. But his advice was hardly taken into consideration. It was determined to treat with the Afghans; and treating with the Afghans now meant accepting any terms the Afghans chose to impose on their fallen enemies. In the negotiations that went on some written documents were exchanged. One of these, drawn up by the English negotiators, contains a short sentence

which we believe to be absolutely unique in the history of British dealings with armed enemies. It is an appeal to the Afghan conquerors not to be too hard upon the vanquished; not to break the bruised reed. 'In friendship, kindness and consideration are necessary, not overpowering the weak with sufferings!' In friendship!—we appealed to the friendship of Macnaghten's murderers; to the friendship, in any case, of the man whose father we had dethroned and driven into exile. Not overpowering the weak with sufferings! The weak were the English! One might fancy he was reading the plaintive and piteous appeal of some forlorn and feeble tribe of helpless half-breeds for the mercy of arrogant and mastering rulers. 'Suffolk's imperious tongue is stern and rough,' says one in Shakespeare's pages when he is bidden to ask for consideration at the hands of captors whom he is no longer able to resist. The tongue with which the English force at Cabul addressed the Afghans was not imperious or stern or rough. It was bated, mild and plaintive. Only the other day, it would seem, these men had blown up the gates of Ghuznee and rushed through the dense smoke and the falling ruins to attack the enemy hand to hand. Only the other day our envoy had received in surrender the bright sword of Dost Mahomed. Now the same men who had seen these things could only plead for a little gentleness of consideration, and had no thought of resistance, and did not any longer seem to know how to die.

We accepted the terms of treaty offered to us. Nothing else could be done by men who were not prepared to adopt the advice of the heroic father in Corneille. The English were at once to take themselves off out of Afghanistan, giving up all their guns except six, which they were allowed to retain for their necessary defence in their mournful journey home; they were to leave behind all the treasure, and to guarantee the payment of something additional for the safe conduct of the poor little army to Peshawur or to Jellalabad; and they were to hand over six officers as hostages for the due fulfilment of the conditions. It is of course understood that the conditions included the immediate release of Dost Mahomed and his family and their return to Afghanistan. When these should return, the six hostages were to be released. Only one concession had been obtained from the conquerors. It was at first demanded that some of the married ladies should be left as hostages; but on the urgent representations of the English officers this condition was waived—at least for the moment. When the treaty was signed, the officers who had been seized when Macnaghten was murdered were released.

It is worth mentioning that these officers were not badly treated by Akbar Khan while they were in his power. On the contrary, he had to make strenuous efforts, and did make them in good faith, to save them

from being murdered by bands of his fanatical followers. One of the officers has himself described the almost desperate efforts which Akbar Khan had to make to save him from the fury of the mob, who thronged, thirsting for the blood of the Englishman, up to the very stirrup of their young chief. 'Akbar Khan,' says this officer, 'at length drew his sword and laid about him right manfully' in defence of his prisoner. When, however, he had got the latter into a place of safety, the impetuous young Afghan chief could not restrain a sneer at his captive and the cause his captive represented. Turning to the English officer, he said more than once, 'in a tone of triumphant derision,' some words such as these: 'So you are the man who came here to seize my country?' It must be owned that the condition of things gave bitter meaning to the taunt, if they did not actually excuse it. At a later period of this melancholy story it is told by Lady Sale that crowds of the fanatical Ghilzyes were endeavouring to persuade Akbar Khan to slaughter all the English, and that when he tried to pacify them they said that when Burnes came into the country they entreated Akbar Khan's father to have Burnes killed, or he would go back to Hindostan, and on some future day return and bring an army with him, 'to take our country from us'; and all the calamities had come upon them because Dost Mahomed would not take their advice. Akbar Khan either was or pretended to be moderate. He might indeed safely put on an air of magnanimity. His enemies were doomed. It needed no command from him to decree their destruction.

The withdrawal from Cabul began. It was the heart of a cruel winter. The English had to make their way through the awful pass of Koord Cabul. This stupendous gorge runs for some five miles between mountain ranges so narrow, lofty and grim, that in the winter season the rays of the sun can hardly pierce its darkness even at the noontide. Down the centre dashed a precipitous mountain torrent, so fiercely that the stern frost of that terrible time could not stay its course. The snow lay in masses on the ground; the rocks and stones that raised their heads above the snow in the way of the unfortunate travellers were slippery with frost. Soon the white snow began to be stained and splashed with blood. Fearful as this Koord Cabul Pass was, it was only a degree worse than the road which for two whole days the English had to traverse to reach it. The army which set out from Cabul numbered more than four thousand fighting men, of whom Europeans, it should be said, formed but a small proportion; and some twelve thousand camp followers of all kinds. There were also many women and children. Lady Macnaghten, widow of the murdered envoy; Lady Sale, whose gallant husband was holding Jellalabad at the near end of the Khyber Pass towards the Indian frontier; Mrs. Sturt, her

daughter, soon to be widowed by the death of her young husband; Mrs. Trevor and her seven children, and many other pitiable fugitives. The winter journey would have been cruel and dangerous enough in time of peace; but this journey had to be accomplished in the midst of something far worse than common war. At every step of the road, every opening of the rocks, the unhappy crowd of confused and heterogeneous fugitives were beset by bands of savage fanatics, who with their long guns and long knives were murdering all they could reach. It was all the way a confused constant battle against a guerrilla enemy of the most furious and merciless temper, who were perfectly familiar with the ground, and could rush forward and retire exactly as suited their tactics. The English soldiers, weary, weak, and crippled by frost, could make but a poor fight against the savage Afghans. 'It was no longer,' says Sir J. W. Kaye, 'a retreating army; it was a rabble in chaotic flight.' Men, women, and children, horses, ponies, camels, the wounded, the dying, the dead, all crowded together in almost inextricable confusion among the snow and amid the relentless enemies. 'The massacre'—to quote again from Sir J. W. Kaye, 'was fearful in this Koord Cabul Pass. Three thousand men are said to have fallen under the fire of the enemy, or to have dropped down paralysed and exhausted to be slaughtered by the Afghan knives. And amidst these fearful scenes of carnage, through a shower of matchlock balls, rode English ladies on horseback or in camel-panniers, sometimes vainly endeavouring to keep their children beneath their eyes, and losing them in the confusion and bewilderment of the desolating march.'

Was it for this, then, that our troops had been induced to capitulate? Was this the safe-conduct which the Afghan chiefs had promised in return for their accepting the ignominious conditions imposed on them? Some of the chiefs did exert themselves to their utmost to protect the unfortunate English. It is not certain what the real wish of Akbar Khan may have been. He protested that he had no power to restrain the hordes of fanatical Ghilzyes, whose own immediate chiefs had not authority enough to keep them from murdering the English whenever they got a chance. The force of some few hundred horsemen whom Akbar Khan had with him were utterly incapable, he declared, of maintaining order among such a lot of infuriated and lawless savages. Akbar Khan constantly appeared on the scene during this journey of terror. At every opening or break of the long straggling flight he and his little band of followers showed themselves on the horizon: trying still to protect the English from utter ruin, as he declared; come to gloat over their misery and to see that it was surely accomplished, some of the unhappy English were ready to believe. Yet his presence was something that seemed to give a hope of protection.

Akbar Khan at length startled the English by a proposal that the women and children who were with the army should be handed over to his custody to be conveyed by him in safety to Peshawur. There was nothing better to be done. The only modification of his request, or command, that could be obtained was that the husbands of the married ladies should accompany their wives. With this agreement the women and children were handed over to the care of this dreaded enemy, and Lady Macnaghten had to undergo the agony of a personal interview with the man whose own hand had killed her husband. Few scenes in poetry or romance can surely be more thrilling with emotion than such a meeting as this must have been. Akbar Khan was kindly in his language, and declared to the unhappy widow that he would give his right arm to undo, if it were possible, the deed that he had done.

The women and children and the married men whose wives were among this party were taken from the unfortunate army and placed under the care of Akbar Khan. As events turned out, this proved a fortunate thing for them. But in any case it was the best thing that could be done. Not one of these women and children could have lived through the horrors of the journey which lay before the remnant of what had once been a British force. The march was resumed; new horrors set in; new heaps of corpses stained the snow; and then Akbar Khan presented himself with a fresh proposition. In the treaty made at Cabul between the English authorities and the Afghan chiefs there was an article which stipulated that 'the English force at Jellalabad shall march for Peshawur before the Cabul army arrives, and shall not delay on the road.' Akbar Khan was especially anxious to get rid of the little army at Jellalabad at the near end of the Khyber Pass. He desired above all things that it should be on the march home to India; either that it might be out of his way, or that he might have a chance of destroying it on its way. It was in great measure as a security for its moving that he desired to have the women and children under his care. It is not likely that he meant any harm to the women and children; it must be remembered that his father and many of the women of his family were under the control of the British Government as prisoners in Hindostan. But he fancied that if he had the English women in his hands the army at Jellalabad could not refuse to obey the condition set down in the article of the treaty. Now that he had the women in his power, however, he demanded other guarantees, with openly acknowledged purpose of keeping these latter until Jellalabad should have been evacuated. He demanded that General Elphinstone, the commander, with his second in command, and also one other officer, should hand themselves over to him as hostages. He promised if this were done to

exert himself more than before to restrain the fanatical tribes, and also to provide the army in the Koord Cabul Pass with provisions. There was nothing for it but to submit; and the English general himself became, with the women and children, a captive in the hands of the inexorable enemy.

Then the march of the army, without a general, went on again. Soon it became the story of a general without an army; before very long there was neither general nor army. It is idle to lengthen a tale of mere horrors. The straggling remnant of an army entered the Jugdulluk Pass —a dark, steep, narrow, ascending path between crags. The miserable toilers found that the fanatical, implacable tribes had barricaded the pass. All was over. The army of Cabul was finally extinguished in that barricaded pass. It was a trap; the British were taken in it. A few mere fugitives escaped from the scene of actual slaughter, and were on the road to Jellalabad, where Sale and his little army were holding their own. When they were within sixteen miles of Jellalabad the number was reduced to six. Of these six, five were killed by straggling marauders on the way. One man alone reached Jellalabad to tell the tale. Literally one man, Dr. Brydon, came to Jellalabad out of a moving host which had numbered in all some sixteen thousand when it set out on its march. The curious eye will search through history or fiction in vain for any picture more thrilling with the suggestions of an awful catastrophe than that of this solitary survivor, faint and reeling on his jaded horse, as he appeared under the walls of Jellalabad, to bear the tidings of our Thermopylæ of pain and shame.

This is the crisis of the story. With this at least the worst of the pain and shame were destined to end. The rest is all, so far as we are concerned, reaction and recovery. Our successes are common enough; we may tell their tale briefly in this instance. The garrison at Jellalabad had received before Dr. Brydon's arrival an intimation that they were to go out and march towards India in accordance with the terms of the treaty extorted from Elphinstone at Cabul. They very properly declined to be bound by a treaty which, as General Sale rightly conjectured, had been 'forced from our envoy and military commander with the knives at their throats.' General Sale's determination was clear and simple. 'I propose to hold this place on the part of Government until I receive its order to the contrary.' This resolve of Sale's was really the turning point of the history. Sale held Jellalabad; Nott was at Candahar. Akbar Khan besieged Jellalabad. Nature seemed to have declared herself emphatically on his side, for a succession of earthquake shocks shattered the walls of the place, and produced more terrible destruction than the most formid-

able guns of modern warfare could have done. But the garrison held out fearlessly; they restored the parapets, re-established every battery, re-trenched the whole of the gates, and built up all the breaches. They resisted every attempt of Akbar Khan to advance upon their works, and at length when it became certain that General Pollock was forcing the Khyber Pass to come to their relief, they determined to attack Akbar Khan's army; they issued boldly out of their forts, forced a battle on the Afghan chief, and completely defeated him. Before Pollock, having gallantly fought his way through the Khyber Pass, had reached Jellalabad, the beleaguering army had been entirely defeated and dispersed. General Nott at Candahar was ready now to co-operate with General Sale and General Pollock for any movement on Cabul which the authorities might advise or sanction. Meanwhile the unfortunate Shah Soojah, whom we had restored with so much pomp of announcement to the throne of his ancestors, was dead. He was assassinated in Cabul, soon after the departure of the British, by the orders of some of the chiefs who detested him; and his body, stripped of its royal robes and its many jewels, was flung into a ditch. Historians quarrel a good deal over the question of his sincerity and fidelity in his dealings with us. It is not likely that an Oriental of his temperament and his weakness could have been capable of any genuine and unmixed loyalty to the English strangers. It seems to us probable enough that he may at important moments have wavered and even faltered, glad to take advantage of any movement that might safely rid him of us, and yet on the whole preferring our friendship and our protection to the tender mercies which he was doomed to experience when our troops had left him. But if we ask concerning his gratitude to us, it may be well also to ask what there was in our conduct towards him which called for any enthusiastic display of gratitude. We did not help him out of any love for him, or any concern for the justice of his cause. It served us to have a puppet, and we took him when it suited us. We also abandoned him when it suited us. As Lady Teazle proposes to do with honour in her conference with Joseph Surface, so we ought to do with gratitude in discussing the merits of Shah Soojah—leave it out of the question. What Shah Soojah owed to us was a few weeks of idle pomp and absurd dreams, a bitter awakening and a shameful death.

During this time a new Governor-General had arrived in India. Lord Auckland's time had run out, and during its latter months he had become nerveless and despondent because of the utter failure of the policy which in an evil hour for himself and his country he had been induced to undertake. It does not seem that it ever was at heart a policy of his own, and he knew that the East India Company were altogether opposed to it. The

Company were well aware of the vast expense which our enterprises in Afghanistan must impose on the revenues of India, and they looked forward eagerly to the earliest opportunity of bringing it to a close. Lord Auckland had been persuaded into adopting it against his better judgment, and against even the whisperings of his conscience; and now he too longed to be done with it; but he wished to leave Afghanistan as a magnanimous conqueror. He had in his own person discounted the honours of victory. He had received an earldom for the services he was presumed to have rendered to his sovereign and his country. He had therefore in full sight that mournful juxtaposition of incongruous objects which a great English writer has described so touchingly and tersely—the trophies of victory and the battle lost. He was an honourable, kindly gentleman, and the news of all the successive calamities fell upon him with a crushing, an overwhelming weight. In plain language, the Governor-General lost his head. He seemed to have no other idea than that of getting all our troops as quickly as might be out of Afghanistan and shaking the dust of the place off our feet for ever. It may be doubted whether, if we had pursued such a policy as this, we might not as well have left India itself once for all. If we had allowed it to seem clear to the Indian populations and princes that we could be driven out of Afghanistan with humiliation and disaster, and that we were unable or afraid to strike one blow to redeem our military credit, we should before long have seen in Hindostan many an attempt to enact there the scenes of Cabul and Candahar. Unless a moralist is prepared to say that a nation which has committed one error of policy is bound in conscience to take all the worst and most protracted consequences of that error, and never make any attempt to protect itself against them, even a moralist of the most scrupulous character can hardly deny that we were bound, for the sake of our interests in Europe as well as in India, to prove that our strength had not been broken nor our counsels paralysed by the disasters in Afghanistan. Yet Lord Auckland does not appear to have thought anything of the kind either needful or within the compass of our national strength. He was, in fact, a broken man.

His successor came out with the brightest hopes of India and the world, founded on his energy and strength of mind. The successor was Lord Ellenborough, the son of that Edward Law, afterwards Lord Ellenborough, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, who had been leading counsel for Warren Hastings when the latter was impeached before the House of Lords. The second Ellenborough was at the time of his appointment filling the office of President of the Board of Control, an office he had held before. He was therefore well acquainted with the affairs of India. He had come into office under Sir Robert Peel on the resignation of the

Melbourne Ministry. He was looked upon as a man of great ability and energy. It was known that his personal predilections were for the career of a soldier. He was fond of telling his hearers then and since that the life of a camp was that which he should have loved to lead. He was a man of great and, in certain lights, apparently splendid abilities. There was a certain Orientalism about his language, his aspirations and his policy. He loved gorgeousness and dramatic—ill-natured persons said theatric—effects. Life arranged itself in his eyes as a superb and showy pageant of which it would have been his ambition to form the central figure. His eloquence was often of a lofty and noble order. Men who are still hardly of middle age can remember Lord Ellenborough on great occasions in the House of Lords, and can recollect their having been deeply impressed by him, even though they had but lately heard such speakers as Gladstone or Bright in the other House. It was not easy, indeed, sometimes to avoid the conviction that in listening to Lord Ellenborough one was listening to a really great orator of a somewhat antique and stately type, who attuned his speech to the pitch of an age of loftier and less prosaic aims than ours. When he had a great question to deal with, and when his instincts, if not his reasoning power, had put him on the right, or at least the effective, side of it, he could speak in a tone of poetic and elevated eloquence to which it was impossible to listen without emotion. But if Lord Ellenborough was in some respects a man of genius, he was also a man whose love of mere effects often made him seem like a quack. There are certain characters in which a little of unconscious quackery is associated with some of the elements of true genius. Lord Ellenborough was one of these. Far greater men than he must be associated in the same category. The elder Pitt, the first Napoleon, Mirabeau, Bolingbroke, and many others, were men in whom undoubtedly some of the *charlatan* was mixed up with some of the very highest qualities of genius. In Lord Ellenborough this blending was strongly, and sometimes even startlingly, apparent. To this hour there are men who knew him well in public and private on whom his weaknesses made so disproportionate an impression that they can see in him little more than a mere *charlatan*. This is entirely unjust. He was a man of great abilities and earnestness, who had in him a strange dash of the play-actor, who at the most serious moment of emergency always thought of how to display himself effectively, and who would have met the peril of an empire as poor Narcissa met death, with an overmastering desire to show to the best personal advantage.

Lord Ellenborough's appointment was hailed by all parties in India as the most auspicious that could be made. Here, people said, is surely the great stage for a great actor; and now the great actor is coming. There

would be something fascinating to a temper like his in the thought of redeeming the military honour of his country and standing out in history as the avenger of the shames of Cabul. But those who thought in this way found themselves suddenly disappointed. Lord Ellenborough uttered and wrote a few showy sentences about revenging our losses and 're-establishing in all its original brilliancy our military character.' But when he had done this he seemed to have relieved his mind and to have done enough. With him there was a constant tendency to substitute grandiose phrases for deeds; or perhaps to think that the phrase was the thing of real moment. He said these fine words, and then at once he announced that the only object of the Government was to get the troops out of Afghanistan as quickly as might be, and almost on any terms. The whole of Lord Ellenborough's conduct during this crisis is inexplicable except on the assumption that he really did not know at certain times how to distinguish between phrases and actions. A general outcry was raised in India and among the troops in Afghanistan against the extraordinary policy which Lord Ellenborough propounded. Englishmen, in fact, refused to believe in it; took it as something that must be put aside. English soldiers could not believe that they were to be recalled after defeat; they persisted in the conviction that, let the Governor-General say what he might, his intention must be that the army should retrieve its fame and retire only after complete victory. The Governor-General himself after a while quietly acted on this interpretation of his meaning. He allowed the military commanders in Afghanistan to pull their resources together and prepare for inflicting signal chastisement on the enemy. They were not long in doing this. They encountered the enemy wherever he showed himself and defeated him. They recaptured town after town, until at length, on September 15, 1842, General Pollock's force entered Cabul. A few days after, as a lasting mark of retribution for the crimes which had been committed there, the British commander ordered the destruction of the great bazaar of Cabul, where the mangled remains of the unfortunate envoy Macnaghten had been exhibited in brutal triumph and joy to the Afghan population.

It is not necessary to enter into detailed descriptions of the successful progress of our arms. The war may be regarded as over. It is, however, necessary to say something of the fate of the captives, or hostages, who were hurried away that terrible January night at the command of Akbar Khan. One thing has first to be told which some may now receive with incredulity, but which is, nevertheless, true—there was a British general who was disposed to leave them to their fate and take no trouble about them, and who declared himself under the conviction, from the tenor of

all Lord Ellenborough's despatches, that the recovery of the prisoners was 'a matter of indifference to the Government.' There seems to have been some unhappy spell working against us in all this chapter of our history, by virtue of which even its most brilliant pages were destined to have something ignoble or ludicrous written on them. Better counsels, however, prevailed. General Pollock insisted on an effort being made to recover the prisoners before the troops began to return to India, and he appointed to this noble duty the husband of one of the hostage ladies—Sir Robert Sale. The prisoners were recovered with greater ease than was expected—so many of them as were yet alive. Poor General Elphinstone had long before succumbed to disease and hardship. The ladies had gone through strange privations. Thirty-six years ago the tale of the captivity of Lady Sale and her companions was in every mouth all over England; nor did any civilised land fail to take an interest in the strange and pathetic story. They were hurried from fort to fort as the designs and the fortunes of Akbar Khan dictated his disposal of them. They suffered almost every fierce alternation of cold and heat. They had to live on the coarsest fare; they were lodged in a manner which would have made the most wretched prison accommodation of a civilised country seem luxurious by comparison; they were in constant uncertainty and fear, not knowing what might befall. Yet they seem to have held up their courage and spirits wonderfully well, and to have kept the hearts of the children alive with mirth and sport at moments of the utmost peril. Gradually it became more and more suspected that the fortunes of Akbar Khan were falling. At last it was beyond doubt that he had been completely defeated. Then they were hurried away again, they knew not whither, through ever-ascending mountain passes, under a scorching sun. They were being carried off to the wild rugged regions of the Indian Caucasus. They were bestowed in a miserable fort at Bameean. They were now under the charge of one of Akbar Khan's soldiers of fortune. This man had begun to suspect that things were wellnigh hopeless with Akbar Khan. He was induced by gradual and very cautious approaches to enter into an agreement with the prisoners for their release. The English officers signed an agreement with him to secure him a large reward and a pension for life, if he enabled them to escape. He accordingly declared that he renounced his allegiance to Akbar Khan; all the more readily, seeing that news came in of the chief's total defeat and flight, no one knew whither. The prisoners and their escort, lately their gaoler and guards, set forth on their way to General Pollock's camp. On their way they met the English parties sent out to seek for them. Sir Robert Sale found his wife again. 'Our joy,' says one of the rescued prisoners, 'was too great, too overwhelming, for tongue

to utter.' Description, indeed, could do nothing for the effect of such a meeting but to spoil it.

There is a very different ending to the episode of the English captives in Bokhara. Colonel Stoddart, who had been sent to the Persian camp in the beginning of all these events to insist that Persia must desist from the siege of Herat, was sent subsequently on a mission to the Ameer of Bokhara. The Ameer received him favourably at first, but afterwards became suspicious of English designs of conquest, and treated Stoddart with marked indignity. The Ameer appears to have been the very model of a melodramatic Eastern tyrant. He was cruel and capricious as another Caligula, and perhaps, in truth, quite as mad. He threw Stoddart into prison. Captain Conolly was appointed two years after to proceed to Bokhara and other countries of the same region. He undertook to endeavour to effect the liberation of Stoddart, but could only succeed in sharing his sufferings, and, at last, his fate. The Ameer had written a letter to the Queen of England, and the answer was written by the Foreign Secretary, referring the Ameer to the Governor-General of India. The savage tyrant redoubled the ill-treatment of his captives. He accused them of being spies and of giving help to his enemies. The Indian Government were of opinion that the envoys had in some manner exceeded their instructions, and that Conolly in particular had contributed by indiscretion to his own fate. Nothing therefore was done to obtain their release beyond diplomatic efforts, and appeals to the magnanimity of the Ameer, which had not any particular effect. Dr. Wolff, the celebrated traveller and missionary, afterwards undertook an expedition of his own in the hope of saving the unfortunate captives; but he only reached Bokhara in time to hear that they had been put to death. The moment and the actual manner of their death cannot be known to positive certainty, but there is little doubt that they were executed on the same day by the orders of the Ameer. The journals of Conolly have been preserved up to an advanced period of his captivity, and they relieve so far the melancholy of the fate that fell on the unfortunate officers by showing that the horrors of their hopeless imprisonment were so great that their dearest friends must have been glad to know of their release even by the knife of the executioner. It is perhaps not the least bitter part of the story, that in the belief of many, including the unfortunate officers themselves, the course pursued by the English authorities in India had done more to hand them over to the treacherous cruelty of their captor than to release them from his power. In truth, the authorities of India had had enough of intervention. It would have needed a great exigency indeed to stir them into energy of action soon again in Central Asia.

This thrilling chapter of English history closes with something like a piece of harlequinade. The curtain fell amid general laughter. Only the genius of Lord Ellenborough could have turned the mood of India and of England to mirth on such a subject. Lord Ellenborough was equal to this extraordinary feat. The never-to-be-forgotten proclamation about the restoration to India of the gates of the temple of Somnauth, redeemed at Lord Ellenborough's orders when Ghuznee was retaken by the English, was first received with incredulity as a practical joke; then with one universal burst of laughter; then with indignation, and then, again, when the natural anger had died away, with laughter again. 'My brothers and my friends,' wrote Lord Ellenborough 'to all the princes, chiefs, and people of India,'—'Our victorious army bears the gates of the temple of Somnauth in triumph from Afghanistan, and the despoiled tomb of Sultan Mahmoud looks upon the ruins of Ghuznee. The insult of eight hundred years is at last avenged. The gates of the temple of Somnauth, so long the memorial of your humiliation, are become the proudest record of your national glory; the proof of your superiority in arms over the nations beyond the Indus.'

No words of pompous man could possibly have put together greater absurdities. The brothers and friends were Mahometans and Hindoos, who were about as likely to agree as to the effect of these symbols of triumph as a Fenian and an Orangeman would be to fraternize in a toast to the glorious, pious and immortal memory. To the Mahometans the triumph of Lord Ellenborough was simply an insult. To the Hindoos the offer was ridiculous; for the temple of Somnauth itself was in ruins, and the ground it covered was trodden by Mahometans. To finish the absurdity, the gates proved not to be genuine relics at all.

On October 1, 1842, exactly four years since Lord Auckland's proclamation announcing and justifying the intervention to restore Shah Soojah, Lord Ellenborough issued another proclamation announcing the complete failure and the revocation of the policy of his predecessor. Lord Ellenborough declared that 'to force a sovereign upon a reluctant people would be as inconsistent with the policy as it is with the principles of the British Government;' that therefore they would recognise any government approved by the Afghans themselves; that the British arms would be withdrawn from Afghanistan, and that the Government of India would remain 'content with the limits nature appears to have assigned to its empire.' Dost Mahomed was released from his captivity, and before long was ruler of Cabul once again. Thus ended the story of our expedition to reorganise the internal condition of Afghanistan. 'After four years of unparalleled trial and disaster, everything was restored to the condition in

which we found it; except that there were so many brave Englishmen sleeping in bloody graves. The Duke of Wellington ascribed the causes of our failure to making war with a peace establishment; making war without a safe base of operations; carrying the native army out of India into a strange and cold climate; invading a poor country which was unequal to the supply of our wants; giving undue power to political agents; want of forethought and undue confidence in the Afghans on the part of Sir W. Macnaghten; placing our magazines, even our treasure, in indefensible places; great military neglect and mismanagement after the outbreak. Doubtless these were in a military sense the reasons for the failure of an enterprise which cost the revenues of India an enormous amount of treasure. But the causes of failure were deeper than any military errors could explain. It is doubtful whether the genius of a Napoleon and the forethought of a Wellington could have won any permanent success for an enterprise founded on so false and fatal a policy. Nothing in the ability or devotion of those entrusted with the task of carrying it out could have made it deserve success. Our first error of principle was to go completely out of our way for the purpose of meeting mere speculative dangers; our next and far greater error was made when we attempted, in the words of Lord Ellenborough's proclamation, to force a sovereign upon a reluctant people.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE REPEAL YEAR

'THE year 1843,' said O'Connell,' 'is and shall be the great Repeal year.' In the year 1843, at all events, O'Connell and his Repeal agitation are entitled to the foremost place. The character of the man himself well deserves some calm consideration. We are now, perhaps, in a condition to do it justice. We are far removed in sentiment and political association, if not exactly in years, from the time when O'Connell was the idol of one party, and the object of all the bitterest scorn and hatred of the other. No man of his time was so madly worshipped and so fiercely denounced. No man in our time was ever the object of so much abuse in the newspapers. The fiercest and coarsest attacks that we can remember to have been made in English journals on Cobden and Bright during the heat of the Anti-Corn Law agitation seem placid, gentle, and almost complimentary when compared with the criticisms daily applied to O'Connell. The only vituperation which could equal in vehemence and scurrility that poured out upon O'Connell was that which O'Connell himself poured out upon his

assailants. His hand was against every man, if every man's hand was against him. He asked for no quarter, and he gave none.

We have outlived, not the times merely, but the whole spirit of the times so far as political controversy is concerned. We are now able to recognise the fact that a public man may hold opinions which are distasteful to the majority, and yet be perfectly sincere and worthy of respect. We are well aware that a man may differ from us, even on vital questions, and yet be neither fool nor knave. But this view of things was not generally taken in the days of O'Connell's great agitation. He and his enemies alike acted in their controversies on the principle that a political opponent is necessarily a blockhead or a scoundrel. It is strange and somewhat melancholy to read the strictures of so enlightened a woman as Miss Martineau upon O'Connell. They are all based upon what a humorous writer has called the 'fiend-in-human-shape theory.' Miss Martineau not merely assumes that O'Connell was insincere and untrustworthy, but discourses of him on the assumption that he was knowingly and purposely a villain. Not only does she hold that his Repeal agitation was an unqualified evil for his country, and that Repeal, if gained, would have been a curse to it, but she insists that O'Connell himself was thoroughly convinced of the facts. She devotes whole pages of lively and acrid argument to prove, not only that O'Connell was ruining his country, but that he knew he was ruining it, and persevered in his wickedness out of pure self-seeking. No writer possessed of one-tenth of Miss Martineau's intellect and education would now reason after that fashion about any public man. If there is any common delusion of past days which may be taken as entirely exploded now, it is the idea that any man ever swayed vast masses of people, and became the idol and the hero of a nation, by the strength of a conscious hypocrisy and imposture.

O'Connell in this Repeal year, as he called it, was by far the most prominent politician in these countries who had never been in office. He had been the patron of the Melbourne Ministry, and his patronage had proved baneful to it. One of the great causes of the detestation in which the Melbourne Whigs were held by a vast number of English people was their alleged subserviency to the Irish agitator. We cannot be surprised if the English public just then was little inclined to take an impartial estimate of O'Connell. He had attacked some of their public men in language of the fiercest denunciation. He had started an agitation which seemed as if it were directly meant to bring about a break-up of the Imperial system so lately completed by the Act of Union. He was opposed to the existence of the State Church in Ireland. He was the bitter enemy of the Irish landlord class—of the landlords, that is to say, who took their

title in any way from England. He was familiarly known in the graceful controversy of the time as the 'Big Beggarman.' It was an article of faith with the general public that he was enriching himself at the expense of a poor and foolish people. It is a matter of fact that he had given up a splendid practice at the bar to carry on his agitation; that he lost by the agitation, pecuniarily, far more than he ever got by it; that he had not himself received from first to last anything like the amount of the noble tribute so becomingly and properly given to Mr. Cobden, and so honourably accepted by him; and that he died poor, leaving his sons poor. Indeed, it is a remarkable evidence of the purifying nature of any great political cause, even where the object sought is but a phantom, that it is hardly possible to give a single instance of a great political agitation carried on in these countries and in modern times by leaders who had any primary purpose of making money. But at that time the general English public were firmly convinced that O'Connell was simply keeping up his agitation for the sake of pocketing 'the rent.' Some of the qualities, too, that specially endeared him to his Celtic countrymen made him particularly objectionable to Englishmen; and Englishmen have never been famous for readiness to enter into the feelings and accept the point of view of other peoples. O'Connell was a thorough Celt. He represented all the impulsiveness, the quick-changing emotions, the passionate, exaggerated loves and hatred, the heedlessness of statement, the tendency to confound impressions with facts, the ebullient humour—all the other qualities that are especially characteristic of the Celt. The Irish people were the audience to which O'Connell habitually played. It may indeed be said that even in playing to this audience he commonly played to the gallery. As the orator of a popular assembly, as the orator of a monster meeting, he probably never had an equal in these countries. He had many of the physical endowments that are especially favourable to success in such a sphere. He had a herculean frame, a stately presence, a face capable of expressing easily and effectively the most rapid alternations of mood, and a voice which all hearers admit to have been almost unrivalled for strength and sweetness. Its power, its pathos, its passion, its music have been described in words of positive rapture by men who detested O'Connell, and who would rather if they could have denied to him any claim on public attention, even in the matter of voice. He spoke without studied preparation, and of course had all the defects of such a style. He fell into repetition and into carelessness of construction; he was hurried away into exaggeration and sometimes into mere bombast. But he had all the peculiar success, too, which rewards the orator who can speak without preparation. He always spoke right to the hearts of his hearers. On the platform or in

Parliament, whatever he said was said to his audience, and was never in the nature of a discourse delivered over their heads. He entered the House of Commons when he was nearly fifty-four years of age. Most persons supposed that the style of speaking he had formed, first in addressing juries, and next in rousing Irish mobs, must cause his failure when he came to appeal to the unsympathetic and fastidious House of Commons. But it is certain that O'Connell became one of the most successful Parliamentary orators of his time. Lord Jeffrey, a professional critic, declared that all other speakers in the House seemed to him only talking schoolboy-talk after he had heard O'Connell. No man we now know of is less likely to be carried away by any of the claptrap arts of a false demogogic style than Mr. Roebuck; and Mr. Roebuck has said that he considers O'Connell the greatest orator he ever heard in the House of Commons; Charles Dickens, when a reporter in the gallery, where he had few equals, if any, in his craft, put down his pencil once when engaged in reporting a speech of O'Connell's on one of the tithe riots in Ireland, and declared that he could not take notes of the speech, so moved was he by its pathos. Lord Beaconsfield, who certainly had no great liking for O'Connell, has spoken in terms as high as any one could use about his power over the House. But O'Connell's eloquence only helped him to make all the more enemies in the House of Commons. He was reckless even there in his denunciation, although he took care never to obtrude on Parliament the extravagant and unmeaning abuse of opponents which delighted the Irish mob meetings.

O'Connell was a crafty and successful lawyer. The Irish peasant, like the Scottish, is, or at least then was, remarkably fond of litigation. He delighted in the quirks and quibbles of law, and in the triumphs won by the skill of lawyers over opponents. He admired O'Connell all the more when O'Connell boasted and proved that he could drive a coach and six through any Act of Parliament. One of the pet heroes of Irish legend is a personage whose cleverness and craft procure for him a *sobriquet* which has been rendered into English by the words 'twists upon twists and tricks upon tricks.' O'Connell was in the eyes of many of the Irish peasantry an embodiment of 'twists upon twists and tricks upon tricks,' enlisted in their cause for the confusion of their adversaries. He had borne the leading part in carrying Catholic Emancipation. He had encountered all the danger and responsibility of the somewhat aggressive movement by which it was finally secured. It is true that it was a reform which in the course of civilisation must have been carried. It had in its favour all the enlightenment of the time. The eloquence of the greatest orators, the intellect of the truest philosophers, the prescience of the wisest statesmen had pleaded for it and helped to make its way clear. No one can doubt that

it must in a short time have been carried if O'Connell had never lived. But it was carried just then by virtue of O'Connell's bold agitation and by the wise resolve of the Tory Government not to provoke a civil war. It is deeply to be regretted that Catholic Emancipation was not conceded to the claims of justice. Had it been so yielded, it is very doubtful whether we should ever have heard much of the Repeal agitation. But the Irish people saw, and indeed all the world was made aware of the fact, that emancipation would not have been conceded just then at least but for the fear of civil disturbance. To an Englishman looking coolly back from a distance, the difference is clear between granting to-day rather than provoke disturbance that which everyone sees must be granted some time, and conceding what the vast majority of the English people believe can never with propriety or even safety be granted at all. But we can hardly wonder if the Irish peasant did not make such distinctions. All he knew was that O'Connell had demanded Catholic Emancipation, and had been answered at first by a direct refusal; that he had said he would compel its concession, and that in the end it was conceded to him. When, therefore, O'Connell said that he would compel the Government to give him repeal of the Union, the Irish peasant naturally believed that he could keep his word.

Nor is there any reason to doubt that O'Connell himself believed in the possibility of accomplishing his purpose. We are apt now to think of the Union between England and Ireland as of time-honoured endurance. It had been scarcely thirty years in existence when O'Connell entered Parliament. The veneration of ancient lineage, the majesty of custom, the respect due to the 'wisdom of our ancestors'—none of these familiar claims could be urged on behalf of the legislative union between England and Ireland. To O'Connell it appeared simply as a modern innovation which had nothing to be said for it except that a majority of Englishmen had by threats and bribery forced it on a majority of Irishmen. Mr. Lecky, the author of the 'History of European Morals,' may be cited as an impartial authority on such a subject. Let us see what he says, in his work on 'The Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland,' with regard to the movement for repeal of the Union, of which it seems almost needless to say he disapproves. 'O'Connell perceived clearly,' says Mr. Lecky, 'that the tendency of affairs in Europe was towards the recognition of the principle that a nation's will is the one legitimate rule of its government. All rational men acknowledged that the Union was imposed on Ireland by corrupt means contrary to the wish of one generation. O'Connell was prepared to show, by the protest of the vast majority of the people, that it was retained without the acquiescence of the next. He had allied himself

with the parties that were rising surely and rapidly to power in England —with the democracy, whose gradual progress is effacing the most venerable landmarks of the Constitution—with the Free Traders, whose approaching triumph he had hailed and exulted in from afar. He had perceived the possibility of forming a powerful party in Parliament, which would be free to co-operate with all English parties without coalescing with any, and might thus turn the balance of factions and decide the fate of Ministries. He saw, too, that while England in a time of peace might resist the expressed will of the Irish nation, its policy would be necessarily modified in time of war; and he predicted that should there be a collision with France while the nation was organised as in 1843, Repeal would be the immediate and the inevitable consequence. In a word, he believed that under a constitutional government the will of four-fifths of a nation, if peacefully, perseveringly and energetically expressed, must sooner or later be triumphant. If a war had broken out during the agitation—if the life of O'Connell had been prolonged ten years longer—if any worthy successor had assumed his mantle—if a fearful famine had not broken the spirit of the people—who can say that the agitation would not have been successful?' No one, we fancy, except those who are always convinced that nothing can ever come to pass which they think ought not to come to pass. At all events, if an English political philosopher, surveying the events after a distance of thirty years, is of opinion that Repeal was possible, it is not surprising that O'Connell thought its attainment possible at the time when he set himself to agitate for it. Even if this be not conceded, it will at least be allowed that it is not very surprising if the Irish peasant saw no absurdity in the movement. Our system of government by party does not lay claim to absolute perfection. It is an excellent mechanism on the whole; it is probably the most satisfactory that the wit of man has yet devised for the management of the affairs of a state; but its greatest admirers will bear to be told that it has its drawbacks and disadvantages. One of these undoubtedly is found in the fact that so few reforms are accomplished in deference to the claims of justice, in comparison with those that are yielded to the pressure of numbers. A great English statesman in our own day once said that Parliament had done many just things, but few things because they were just. O'Connell and the Irish people saw that Catholic Emancipation had been yielded to pressure rather than to justice; it is not wonderful if they thought that pressure might prevail as well in the matter of Repeal.

In many respects O'Connell differed from more modern Irish Nationalists. He was a thorough Liberal. He was a devoted opponent of negro slavery; he was a staunch Free Trader; he was a friend of popular

education; he was an enemy to all excess; he was opposed to strikes; he was an advocate of religious equality everywhere; and he declined to receive the commands of the Vatican in his political agitation. 'I am a Catholic, but I am not a Papist,' was his own definition of his religious attitude. He preached the doctrine of constitutional agitation strictly, and declared that no political Reform was worth the shedding of one drop of blood. It may be asked how it came about that with all these excellent attributes, which all critics now allow to him, O'Connell was so detested by the vast majority of the English people. One reason undoubtedly is that O'Connell deliberately revived and worked up for his political purposes the almost extinct national hatreds of Celt and Saxon. As a phrase of political controversy, he may be said to have invented the word 'Saxon.' He gave a terrible license to his tongue. His abuse was outrageous; his praise was outrageous. The very effusiveness of his loyalty told to his disadvantage. People could not understand how one who perpetually denounced 'the Saxon' could be so enthusiastic and rapturous in his professions of loyalty to the Saxon's Queen. In the common opinion of Englishmen, all the evils of Ireland, all the troubles attaching to the connection between the two countries, had arisen from this unmitigated, rankling hatred of Celt for Saxon. It was impossible for them to believe that a man who deliberately applied all the force of his eloquence to revive it could be a genuine patriot. It appeared intolerable that while thus labouring to make the Celt hate the Saxon he should yet profess an extravagant devotion to the Sovereign of England. Yet O'Connell was probably quite sincere in his professions of loyalty. He was in no sense a revolutionist. He had from his education in a French College acquired an early detestation of the principles of the French Revolution. Of the Irish rebels of '98 he spoke with as savage an intolerance as the narrowest English Tories could show in speaking of himself. The Tones, and Emmetts, and Fitzgeralds, whom so many of the Irish people adored, were, in O'Connell's eyes, and in his words, only 'a gang of miscreants.' He grew angry at the slightest expression of an opinion among his followers that seemed to denote even a willingness to discuss any of the doctrines of Communism. His theory and his policy evidently were that Ireland was to be saved by a dictatorship entrusted to himself, with the Irish priesthood acting as his officers and agents. He maintained the authority of the priests, and his own authority by means of them and over them. The political system of the country for the purposes of agitation was to be a sort of hierarchy; the parish priests occupying the lowest grade, the bishops standing on the higher steps, and O'Connell himself supreme as the pontiff over all.

He had a Parliamentary system by means of which he proposed to approach more directly the question of Repeal of the Union. He got seats in the House of Commons for a number of his sons, his nephews, and his sworn retainers. 'O'Connell's tail' was the precursor of 'the Pope's Brass Band' in the slang of the House of Commons. He had an almost supreme control over the Irish constituencies, and whenever a vacancy took place he sent down the Repeal candidate to contest it. He always inculcated and insisted on the necessity of order and peace. Indeed, as he proposed to carry on his agitation altogether by the help of the bishops and the priests, it was not possible for him, even were he so inclined, to conduct it on any other than peaceful principles. 'The man who commits a crime gives strength to the enemy,' was a maxim which he was never weary of impressing upon his followers. The temperance movement set on foot with such remarkable and sudden success by Father Mathew was at once turned to account by O'Connell. He was himself, in his later years at all events, a very temperate man, and he was delighted at the prospect of good order and discipline which the Temperance movement afforded. Father Mathew was very far from sharing all the political opinions of O'Connell. The sweet and simple friar, whose power was that of goodness and enthusiasm only, and who had but little force of character or intellect, shrank from political agitation, and was rather Conservative than otherwise in his views. But he could not afford to repudiate the support of O'Connell, who on all occasions glorified the Temperance movement, and called upon his followers to join it, and was always boasting of his 'noble army of Teetotallers.' It was probably when he found that the mere fact of his having supported the Melbourne Government did so much to discredit that Government in the eyes of Englishmen and to bring about its fall, that O'Connell went deliberately out of the path of mere Parliamentary agitation, and started that system of agitation by monster meeting which has since his time been regularly established among us as a principal part of all political organisation for a definite purpose. He founded in Dublin a Repeal Association which met in a place on Burgh Quay, and which he styled Conciliation Hall. Around him in this Association he gathered his sons, his relatives, his devoted followers, priestly and lay. The *Nation* newspaper, then in its youth and full of a fresh literary vigour, was one of his most brilliant instruments. At a later period of the agitation it was destined to be used against him, and with severe effect. The famous monster meetings were usually held on a Sunday, on some open spot, mostly selected for its historic fame, and with all the picturesque surroundings of hill and stream. From the dawn of the summer day the Repealers were thronging to the

scene of the meeting. They came from all parts of the neighbouring country for miles and miles. They were commonly marshalled and guided by their parish priests. They all attended the services of their Church before the meeting began. The influence of his religion and of his patriotic feelings was brought to bear at once upon the impressionable and emotional Irish Celt. At the meeting O'Connell and several of his chosen orators addressed the crowd on the subject of the wrongs done to Ireland by 'the Saxon,' the claims of Ireland to the restoration of her old Parliament in College Green, and the certainty of her having it restored if Irishmen only obeyed O'Connell and their priests, were sober, and displayed their strength and their unity.

O'Connell himself, it is needless to say, was always the great orator of the day. The agitation developed a great deal of literary talent among the younger men of education; but it never brought out a man who was even spoken of as a possible successor to O'Connell in eloquence. His magnificent voice enabled him to do what no genius and no eloquence less aptly endowed could have done. He could send his lightest word thrilling to the extreme of the vast concourse of people whom he desired to move. He swayed them with the magic of an absolute control. He understood all the moods of his people; to address himself to them came naturally to him. He made them roar with laughter; he made them weep; he made them thrill with indignation. As the shadow runs over a field, so the impression of his varying eloquence ran over the assemblage. He commanded the emotions of his hearers as a consummate conductor sways the energies of his orchestra. Every allusion told. When, in one of the meetings held in his native Kerry, he turned solemnly round and appealed to 'yonder blue mountains where you and I were cradled'; or in sight of the objects he described he apostrophised Ireland as the 'land of the green valley and the rushing river'—an admirable characteristic and complete description; or recalled some historical association connected with the scene he surveyed—each was some special appeal to the instant feelings of his peculiar audience. Sometimes he indulged in the grossest and what ought to have been the most ridiculous flattery of his hearers—flattery which would have offended and disgusted the dullest English audience, But the Irish peasant, with all his keen sense of the ridiculous in others, is singularly open to the influence of any appeal to his own vanity. There is a great deal of the 'eternal-womanly' in the Celtic nature; and it is not easy to overflatter one of the race. Doubtless O'Connell knew this and acted purposely on it; and this was a peculiarity of his political conduct which it would be hard indeed to commend or even to defend. But in truth he adopted in his agitation the tactics he had employed at the

bar. 'A good speech is a good thing,' he used to say; 'but the verdict is *the* thing.' His flattery of his hearers was not grosser than his abuse of all those whom they did not like. His dispraise often had absolutely no meaning in it. There was no sense whatever in calling the Duke of Wellington 'a stunted corporal'; one might as well have called Mont Blanc a molehill. Nobody could have shown more clearly than O'Connell did that he did not believe the *Times* to be 'an obscure rag.' It would have been as humorous and as truthful to say that there was no such paper as the *Times*. But these absurdities made an ignorant audience laugh for the moment, and O'Connell had gained the only point he just then wanted to carry. He would probably have answered any one who remonstrated with him on the disingenuousness of such sayings as Mrs. Thrale says Burke once answered her when she taxed him with a want of literal accuracy, by quoting 'Odds life, must one swear to the truth of a song?' But this recklessness of epithet and description did much to make O'Connell distrusted and disliked in England, where, in whatever heat of political controversy, words are supposed to be the expressions of some manner of genuine sentiment. Of course many of O'Connell's abusive epithets were not only full of humour, but did to some extent fairly represent the weaknesses at least of those against whom they were directed. Some of his historical allusions were of a more mischievous nature than any mere personalities could have been. 'Peel and Wellington,' he said at Kilkenny, 'may be second Cromwells; they may get Cromwell's blunted truncheon, and they may—oh, sacred heavens!—enact on the fair occupants of that gallery' (pointing to the ladies' gallery), 'the murder of the Wexford women. Let it not be supposed that when I made that appeal to the ladies it was but a flight of my imagination. No! when Cromwell entered the town of Wexford by treachery, three hundred ladies, the beauty and loveliness of Wexford, the young and the old, the maid and the matron, were collected round the Cross of Christ; they prayed to heaven for mercy, and I hope they found it; they prayed to the English for humanity, and Cromwell slaughtered them. I tell you this: three hundred women, the grace and beauty and virtue of Wexford, were slaughtered by the English ruffians—sacred heaven!' He went on then to assure his hearers that 'the ruffianly Saxon paper, the *Times*, in the number received by me to-day, presumes to threaten us again with such a scene.' One would like to see the copy of the *Times* which contained such a threat, or indeed any words that could be tortured into a semblance of any such hideous meaning. But the great agitator, when he found he had excited enough the horror of his audience, proceeded to reassure them by the means of all others most ob-

jectionable and dangerous at such a time. 'I am not imaginative,' he said, 'when I talk of the possibility of such scenes anew; but yet I assert that there is no danger to our women now, for the men of Ireland would die to the last in their defence.' Here the whole meeting broke into a storm of impassioned cheering. 'Ay,' the orator exclaimed, when the storm found a momentary hush, 'we were a paltry remnant then; we are millions now.' At Mullaghmast, O'Connell made an impassioned allusion to the massacre of Irish chieftains, said to have taken place on that very spot in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. 'Three hundred and ninety Irish chiefs perished here! They came, confiding in Saxon honour, relying on the protection of the Queen, to a friendly conference. In the midst of revelry, in the cheerful light of the banquet house, they were surrounded and butchered. None returned save one. Their wives were widows, their children fatherless. In their homesteads was heard the shrill shriek of despair—the cry of bitter agony. Oh, Saxon cruelty, how it cheers my heart to think that you dare not attempt such a deed again!' It is not necessary to point out what the effect of such descriptions and such allusions must have been upon an excitable and an ignorant peasant audience—on men who were ready to believe in all sincerity that England only wanted the opportunity to re-enact in the reign of Queen Victoria the scenes of Elizabeth's or Cromwell's day.

The late Lord Lytton has given, in his poem, 'St. Stephens,' a picturesque description of one of these meetings and of the effect produced upon himself by O'Connell's eloquence. 'Once to my sight,' he says, 'the giant thus was given; walled by wide air and roofed by boundless heaven.' He describes 'the human ocean' lying spread out at the giant's feet; its 'wave on wave' flowing 'into space away.' Not unnaturally, Lord Lytton thought 'no clarion could have sent its sound even to the centre' of that crowd.

> And as I thought, rose the sonorous swell
> As from some church tower swings the silvery bell;
> Aloft and clear from airy tide to tide,
> It glided easy as a bird may glide.
> To the last verge of that vast audience sent,
> It played with each wild passion as it went;
> Now stirred the uproar—now the murmur stilled,
> And sobs or laughter answered as it willed.
> Then did I know what spells of infinite choice
> To rouse or lull has the sweet human voice.
> Then did I learn to seize the sudden clue
> To the grand troublous life antique—to view,
> Under the rock-stand of Demosthenes,
> Unstable Athens heave her noisy seas.

The crowds who attended the monster meetings came in a sort of military order and with a certain parade of military discipline. At the meeting held on the Hill of Tara, where O'Connell stood beside the stone said to have been used for the coronation of the ancient monarchs of Ireland, it is declared on the authority of careful and unsympathetic witnesses that a quarter of a million of people must have been present. The Government naturally felt that there was a very considerable danger in the massing together of such vast crowds of men in something like military array and under the absolute leadership of one man, who openly avowed that he had called them together to show England what was the strength her statesmen would have to fear if they continued to deny Repeal to his demand. It is certain now that O'Connell did not at any time mean to employ force for the attainment of his ends. But it is equally certain that he wished the English Government to see that he had the command of an immense number of men, and probably even to believe that he would, if needs were, hurl them in rebellion upon England if ever she should be embarrassed with a foreign war. It is certain, too, that many of O'Connell's most ardent admirers, especially among the young men, were fully convinced that some day or other their leader would call on them to fight, and were much disappointed when they found that he had no such intention. The Government at last resolved to interfere. A meeting was announced to be held at Clontarf on Sunday, October 8, 1843. Clontarf is near Dublin, and is famous in Irish history as the scene of a great victory of the Irish over their Danish invaders. It was intended that this meeting should surpass in numbers and in earnestness the assemblage at Tara. On the very day before the eighth the Lord Lieutenant issued a proclamation prohibiting the meeting as 'calculated to excite reasonable and well-grounded apprehension,' in that its object was 'to accomplish alterations in the laws and constitution of the realm by intimidation and the demonstration of physical force.' O'Connell's power over the people was never shown more effectively than in the control which at that critical moment he was still able to exercise. The populations were already coming in to Clontarf in streams from all the country round, when the proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant was issued. No doubt the Irish Government ran a terrible risk when they delayed so long the issue of their proclamation. With the people already assembling in such masses, the risk of a collision with the police and the soldiery, and of a consequent massacre, is something still shocking to contemplate. It is not surprising, perhaps, if O'Connell and many of his followers made it a charge against the Government that they intended to bring about such a collision in order to make an example of some of the Repealers and thus

strike terror through the country. Some sort of collision would almost undoubtedly have occurred but for the promptitude of O'Connell himself. He at once issued a proclamation of his own to which the populations were likely to pay far more attention than they would to anything coming from Dublin Castle. O'Connell declared that the orders of the Lord Lieutenant must be obeyed; that the meeting must not take place; and that the people must return to their homes. The 'uncrowned king,' as some of his admirers loved to call him, was obeyed, and no meeting was held.

From that moment, however, the great power of the Repeal agitation was gone. The Government had accomplished far more by their proclamation than they could possibly have imagined at the time. They had, without knowing it, compelled O'Connell to show his hand. It was now made clear that he did not intend to have resort to force. From that hour there was virtually a schism between the elder Repealers and the younger. The young and fiery followers of the great agitator lost all faith in him. It would in any case have been impossible to maintain for any very long time the state of national tension in which Ireland had been kept. It must soon come either to a climax or to an anti-climax. It came to an anti-climax. All the imposing demonstrations of physical strength lost their value when it was made positively known that they were only demonstrations, and that nothing was ever to come of them. The eye of an attentive foreigner was then fixed on Ireland and on O'Connell; the eye of one destined to play a part in the political history of our time which none other has surpassed. Count Cavour had not long returned to his own country from a visit made with the express purpose of studying the politics and the general condition of England and Ireland. He wrote to a friend about the crisis then passing in Ireland. 'When one is at a distance,' he said, 'from the theatre of events, it is easy to make prophecies which have already been contradicted by facts. But according to my view O'Connell's fate is sealed. On the first vigorous demonstration of his opponents he has drawn back; from that moment he has ceased to be dangerous.' Cavour was perfectly right. It was never again possible to bring the Irish people up to the pitch of enthusiasm which O'Connell had wrought them to before the suppression of the Clontarf meeting; and before long the Irish national movement had split in two.

The Government at once proceeded to the prosecution of O'Connell and some of his principal associates. Daniel O'Connell himself, his son John, the late Sir John Gray, and Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, were the most conspicuous of those against whom the prosecution was directed. They were charged with conspiring to raise and excite disaffection among her

Majesty's subjects, to excite them to hatred and contempt of the Government and Constitution of the realm. The trial was in many ways a singularly unfortunate proceeding. The Government prosecutor objected to all the Catholics whose names were called as jurors. An error of the sheriffs in the construction of the jury-lists had already reduced by a considerable number the roll of Catholics entitled to serve on juries. It therefore happened that the greatest of Irish Catholics, the representative Catholic of his day, the principal agent in the work of carrying Catholic Emancipation, was tried by a jury composed exclusively of Protestants. It has only to be added that this was done in the metropolis of a country essentially Catholic; a country five-sixths of whose people were Catholics; and on a question affecting indirectly, if not directly, the whole position and claims of Catholics. The trial was long. O'Connell defended himself; and his speech was universally regarded as wanting the power that had made his defence of others so effective in former days. It was for the most part a sober and somewhat heavy argument to prove that Ireland had lost instead of gained by her union with England. The jury found O'Connell guilty along with most of his associates, and he was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment and a fine of 2,000*l*. The others received lighter sentences. O'Connell appealed to the House of Lords against the sentence. In the meantime he issued a proclamation to the Irish people commanding them to keep perfectly quiet and not to commit any offence against the law. 'Every man,' said one of his proclamations, 'who is guilty of the slightest breach of the peace is an enemy of me and of Ireland.' The Irish people took him at his word and remained perfectly quiet.

O'Connell and his principal associates were committed to Richmond Prison, in Dublin. The trial had been delayed in various ways, and the sentence was not pronounced until May 24, 1844. The appeal to the House of Lords—we may pass over intermediate stages of procedure—was heard in the following September. Five law lords were present. The Lord Chancellor (Lord Lyndhurst) and Lord Brougham were of opinion that the sentence of the court below should be affirmed. Lord Denman, Lord Cottenham, and Lord Campbell were of the opposite opinion. Lord Denman, in particular, condemned the manner in which the jury-lists had been prepared. Some of his words on the occasion became memorable, and passed into a sort of proverbial expression. Such practices, he said, would make of the law, 'a mockery, a delusion and a snare.' A strange and memorable scene followed. The constitution of the House of Lords then and for long after made no difference between law lords and others in voting on a question of appeal. As a matter of

practice and of fairness, the lay peers hardly ever interfered in the voting on an appeal. But they had an undoubted right to do so; and it is even certain that in one or two peculiar cases they had exercised the right. If the lay lords were to vote in this instance, the fate of O'Connell and his companions could not be doubtful. O'Connell had always been the bitter enemy of the House of Lords. He had vehemently denounced its authority, its practices, and its leading members. Nor, if the lay peers had voted and confirmed the judgment of the court below, could it have been positively said that an injustice was done by their interference. The majority of the judges on the writ of error had approved the judgment of the court below. In the House of Lords itself the Lord Chancellor and Lord Brougham were of opinion that the judgment ought to be sustained. There would, therefore, have been some ground for maintaining that the substantial justice of the case had been met by the action of the lay peers. On the other hand, it would have afforded a ground for a positive outcry in Ireland if a question purely of law had been decided by the votes of lay peers against their bitter enemy. One peer, Lord Wharncliffe, made a timely appeal to the better judgment and feeling of his brethren. He urged them not to take a course which might allow anyone to say that political or personal feeling had prevailed in a judicial decision of the House of Lords. The appeal had its effect. A moment before one lay peer at least had openly declared that he would insist on his right to vote. When the Lord Chancellor was about to put the question in the first instance, to ascertain in the usual way whether a division would be necessary, several lay peers seemed as if they were determined to vote. But the appeal of Lord Wharncliffe settled the matter. All the lay peers at once withdrew and left the matter according to the usual course in the hands of the law lords. The majority of these being against the judgment of the court below, it was accordingly reversed, and O'Connell and his associates were set at liberty. The propriety of a lay peer voting on a question of judicial appeal was never raised again so long as the appellate jurisdiction of the House of Lords was still exercised in the old and now obsolete fashion.

Nothing could well have been more satisfactory and more fortunate in its results than the conduct of the House of Lords. The effect upon the mind of the Irish people would have been deplorable if it had been seen that O'Connell was convicted by a jury on which there were no Roman Catholics, and that the sentence was confirmed, not by a judicial, but by a strictly political vote of the House of Lords. As it was, the influence of the decision, which proved that even in the assembly most bitterly denounced by O'Connell he could receive fair play, was in the highest

degree satisfactory. It cannot be doubted that it did something to weaken the force of O'Connell's own denunciations of Saxon treachery and wrong-doing. The influence of O'Connell was never the same after the trial. Many causes combined to bring about this result. Most writers ascribe it above all to the trial itself, and the evidence it afforded that the English Government were strong enough to prosecute and punish even O'Connell if he provoked them too far. It is somewhat surprising to find intelligent men like Mr. Green, the author of 'A Short History of the English People,' countenancing such a belief. If the House of Lords had, by the votes of the lay peers, confirmed the sentence on O'Connell, he would have come out of his prison at the expiration of his period of sentence more popular and more powerful than ever. Had his strength and faculty of agitation lasted, he might have agitated thenceforth with more effect than ever. If the Clontarf meeting had not disclosed to a large section of his followers that his policy after all was only to be one of talk, he might have come out of prison just the man he had been, the leader of all classes of Catholics and Nationalists. But the real blow given to O'Connell's popularity was given by O'Connell himself. The moment it was made clear that nothing was to be done but agitate, and that all the monster meetings, the crowds and banners and bands of music, the marshalling and marching and reviewing, meant nothing more than Father Mathew's temperance meetings meant—that moment all the youth of the movement fell off from O'Connell. The young men were very silly, as after events proved. O'Connell was far more wise, and had an infinitely better estimate of the strength of England than they had. But it is certain that the young men were disgusted with the kind of gigantic sham which the great agitator seemed to have been conducting for so long a time. It would have been impossible to keep up for ever such an excitement as that which got together the monster meetings. Such heat cannot be brought up to the burning point and kept there at will. A reaction was inevitable. O'Connell was getting old, and had lived a life of work and wear and tear enough to break down even his constitution of iron. He had kept a great part of his own followers in heart, as he had kept the Government in alarm, by leaving it doubtful whether he would not in the end make an appeal to the reserve of physical force which he so often boasted of having at his back. When the whole secret was out, he ceased to be an object of fear to the one and of enthusiasm to the other. It was neither the Lord Lieutenant's proclamation nor the prosecution by the Government that impaired the influence of O'Connell. It was O'Connell's own proclamation declaring for submission to the law that dethroned him. From that moment the political monarch had to dispute with rebels for

his crown; and the crown fell off in the struggle, like that which Uhland tells of in the pretty poem.

For the Clontarf meeting had been the climax. There was all manner of national rejoicing when the decision of the House of Lords set O'Connell and his fellow-prisoners free. There were illuminations and banquets and meetings and triumphal processions, renewed declarations of allegiance to the great leader, and renewed protestations on his part that Repeal was coming. But his reign was over. His death may as well be recorded here as later. His health broke down; and the disputes in which he became engaged with the Young Irelanders, dividing his party into two hostile camps, were a grievous burthen to him. In Lord Beaconsfield's Life of Lord George Bentinck, a very touching description is given of the last speech made by O'Connell in Parliament. It was on April 3, 1846: 'His appearance,' says Mr. Disraeli, 'was of great debility, and the tones of his voice were very still. His words indeed only reached those who were immediately around him, and the Ministers sitting on the other side of the green table, and listening with that interest and respectful attention which became the occasion.' O'Connell spoke for nearly two hours. 'It was a strange and touching spectacle to those who remembered the form of colossal energy and the clear and thrilling tones that had once startled, disturbed and controlled senates. . . . To the House generally it was a performance in dumb show: a feeble old man muttering before a table; but respect for the great Parliamentary personage kept all as orderly as if the fortunes of a party hung upon his rhetoric; and though not an accent reached the gallery, means were taken that next morning the country should not lose the last and not the least interesting of the speeches of one who had so long occupied and agitated the mind of nations.'

O'Connell became seized with profound melancholy. Only one desire seemed left to him, the desire to close his stormy career in Rome. The Eternal City is the capital, the shrine, the Mecca of the Church to which O'Connell was undoubtedly devoted with all his heart. He longed to lie down in the shadow of the dome of St. Peter's and rest there, and there die. His youth had been wild in more ways than one, and he had long been under the influence of a profound penitence. He had killed a man in a duel, and was through all his after life haunted by regret for the deed, although it was really forced on him, and he had acted only as any other man of his time would have acted in such conditions. But now in his old and sinking days all the errors of his youth and his strong manhood came back upon him, and he longed to steep the painful memories in the sacred influences of Rome. He hurried to Italy at a time when the prospect of

the famine darkening down upon his country cast an additional shadow across his outward path. He reached Genoa, and he went no farther. His strength wholly failed him there, and he died, still far from Rome, on May 15, 1847. The close of his career was a mournful collapse; it was like the sudden crumbling in of some stately and commanding tower. The other day, it seemed, he filled a space of almost unequalled breadth and height in the political landscape; and now he is already gone. 'Even with a thought the rack dislimbs, and makes it indistinct, as water is in water.'

## CHAPTER XIII.

### PEEL'S ADMINISTRATION.

Some important steps in the progress of what may be described as social legislation are part of the history of Peel's Government. The Act of Parliament which prohibited absolutely the employment of women and girls in mines and collieries was rendered unavoidable by the fearful exposures made through the instrumentality of a Commission appointed to enquire into the whole subject. This Commission was appointed on the motion of the then Lord Ashley, since better known as the Earl of Shaftesbury, a man who during the whole of a long career has always devoted himself—sometimes wisely and successfully, sometimes indiscreetly and to little purpose, always with disinterested and benevolent intention—to the task of brightening the lives and lightening the burthens of the working classes and the poor. The Commission found many hideous evils arising from the employment of women and girls underground, and Lord Ashley made such effective use of their disclosures that he encountered very little opposition when he came to propose restrictive legislation. In some of the coal mines women were literally employed as beasts of burden. Where the seam of coal was too narrow to allow them to stand upright, they had to crawl back and forward on all fours for fourteen or sixteen hours a day dragging the trucks laden with coals. The trucks were generally fastened to a chain which passed between the legs of the unfortunate women, and was then connected with a belt which was strapped round their naked waists. Their only clothing often consisted of an old pair of trowsers made of sacking; and they were uncovered from the waist up—uncovered, that is to say, except for the grime and filth that collected and clotted around them. All manner of hideous diseases were generated in these unsexed bodies. Unsexed almost literally some of them became; for their chests were often hard and flat as those of men; and not a few of them lost all reproductive

power: a happy condition truly under the circumstances, where women who bore children only went up to the higher air for a week during their confinement, and were then back at their work again. It would be superfluous to say that the immorality engendered by such a state of things was in exact keeping with the other evils which it brought about. Lord Ashley had the happiness and the honour of putting a stop to this infamous sort of labour for ever by the Act of 1842, which declared that, after a certain limited period, no woman or girl whatever should be employed in mines and collieries.

Lord Ashley was less completely successful in his endeavour to secure a ten hours' limitation for the daily labour of women and young persons in factories. By a vigorous annual agitation on the general subject of factory labour, in which Lord Ashley had followed in the footsteps of Mr. Michael Thomas Sadler, he brought the Government up to the point of undertaking legislation on the subject. They first introduced a bill which combined a limitation of the labour of children in factories with a plan for compulsory education among the children. The educational clauses of the bill had to be abandoned in consequence of a somewhat narrow-minded opposition among the Dissenters, who feared that too much advantage was given to the Church. Afterwards the Government brought in another bill, which became in the end the Factories Act of 1844. It was during the passing of this measure that Lord Ashley tried unsuccessfully to introduce his ten hours' limit. The bill diminished the working hours of children under thirteen years of age, and fixed them at six and a half hours each day; extended somewhat the time during which they were to be under daily instruction, and did a good many other useful and wholesome things. The principle of legislative interference to protect youthful workers in factories had been already established by the Act of 1833; and Lord Ashley's agitation only obtained for it a somewhat extended application. It has since that time again and again received further extension; and in this time, as in the former, there is a constant controversy going on as to whether its principles ought not to be so extended as to guard in almost every way the labour of adult women, and even of adult men. The controversy during Lord Ashley's agitation was always warm and often impassioned. Many thoroughly benevolent men and women could not bring themselves to believe that any satisfactory and permanent results could come of a legislative interference with what might be called the freedom of contract between employers and employed. They argued that it was idle to say the interference was only made or sought in the case of women and boys; for if the women and boys stop off working, they pointed out, the men must perforce in most cases stop off working

too. Some of the public men afterwards most justly popular among the English artisan classes were opposed to the measure on the ground that it was a heedless attempt to interfere with fixed economic laws. It was urged too, and with much semblance of justice, that the interference of the State for the protection or the compulsory education of children in factories would have been much better employed, and was far more loudly called for, in the case of the children employed in agricultural labour. The lot of a factory child, it was contended, is infinitely better in most respects than that of the poor little creature who is employed in holloaing at the crows on a farm. The mill-hand is well cared for, well paid, well able to care for himself and his wife and his family, it was argued; but what of the miserable Giles Scroggins of Dorsetshire or Somersetshire, who never has more in all his life than just enough to keep body and soul together; and for whom, at the close, the workhouse is the only haven of rest? Why not legislate for him—at least for his wife and children?

Neither point requires much consideration from us at present. We have to recognise historical facts; and it is certain that this country has made up its mind that for the present and for a long time to come Parliament will interfere in whatever way seems good to it with the conditions on which labour is carried on. There has been indeed a very marked advance or retrogression, whichever men may please to call it, in public opinion since the ten hours' agitation. At that time compulsory education and the principles of Mr. Gladstone's Irish Land Act would have seemed alike impossible to most persons in this country. The practical mind of the Englishman carries to an extreme the dislike and contempt for what the French call *les principes* in politics. Therefore we oscillate a good deal, the pendulum swinging now very far in the direction of non-interference with individual action, and now still farther in the direction of universal interference and regulation—what was once humorously described as grandmotherly legislation. With our recent experiences we can only be surprised that a few years ago there was such a repugnance to the modest amount of interference with individual rights which Lord Ashley's extremest proposals would have sought to introduce. As regards the other point, it is certain that Parliament will at one time or another do for the children in the fields something very like that which it has done for the children in the factories. It is enough for us to know that practically the factory legislation has worked very well; and that the non-interference in the fields is a far heavier responsibility on the conscience of Parliament than interference in the factories.

Many other things done by Sir Robert Peel's Government aroused bitter controversy and agitation. In one or two remarkable instances

the ministerial policy went near to producing that discord in the Conservative party which we shall presently see break out into passion and schism when Peel came to deal with the Corn Laws. There was, for example, the grant to the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth, a College for the education specially of young men who sought to enter the ranks of the priesthood. The grant was not a new thing. Since before the Act of Union a grant had been made for the college. The Government of Sir Robert Peel only proposed to make that which was insufficient sufficient; to enable the college to be kept in repair and to accomplish the purpose for which it was founded. As Macaulay put it, there was no more question of principle involved than there would be in the sacrifice of a pound instead of a pennyweight on some particular altar. Yet the ministerial proposition called up a very tempest of clamorous bigotry all over the country. What Macaulay described in fierce scorn as 'the bray of Exeter Hall' was heard resounding every day and night. Peel carried his measure, although nearly half his own party in the House of Commons voted against it on the second reading. The whole controversy has little interest now. Perhaps it will be found to live in the memory of many persons, chiefly because of the quarrel it caused between Macaulay and his Edinburgh constituents, and of the annual motion for the withdrawal of the grant which was so long afterwards one of the regular bores of the House of Commons. Many of us can well remember the venerable form of the late Mr. Spooner as year after year he addressed an apathetic, scanty and half-amused audience, pottering over his papers by the light of two candles specially placed for his convenience on the table in front of the Speaker, and endeavouring in vain to arouse England to serious attention on the subject of the awful fate she was preparing for herself by her toleration of the principles of Rome. The Maynooth grant was abolished indeed not long after Mr. Spooner's death; but the manner of its abolition would have given him less comfort even than its introduction. It was abolished when Mr. Gladstone's Government abolished the State Church in Ireland.

Another of Peel's measures which aroused much clamour on both sides was that for the establishment of what were afterwards called the 'godless colleges' in Ireland. O'Connell has often had the credit of applying this nickname to the new colleges; but it was in fact from the extremest of all no-popery men, Sir Robert Harry Inglis, that the expression came. It was indeed from Sir Robert Inglis's side that the first note sounded of opposition to the scheme, although O'Connell afterwards took it vigorously up, and the Pope and the Irish bishops condemned the colleges.

There was objection within the Ministry, as well as without, to the Maynooth grant. Mr. Gladstone, who had been doing admirable work, first as Vice-President, and afterwards as President, of the Board of Trrade, resigned his office because of this proposal. He acted, perhaps, with a too sensitive chivalry. He had written a work, as all the world knows, on the relations of Church and State, and he did not think the views expressed in that book left him free to co-operate in the ministerial measure. Some staid politicians were shocked, many more smiled, not a few sneered. The public in general applauded the spirit of disinterestedness which dictated the young statesman's act.

Mr. Gladstone, however, supported the Queen's College scheme by voice and vote. The proposal of the Government was to establish in Ireland three colleges—one in Cork, the second in Belfast, and the third in Galway—and to affiliate these to a new university to be called the 'Queen's University in Ireland.' The teaching in these colleges was to be purely secular. Nothing could be more admirable than the intentions of Peel and his colleagues. Nor could it be denied that there might have been good seeming hope for a plan which thus proposed to open a sort of neutral ground in the educational controversy. But from both sides of the House and from the extreme party in each Church came an equally fierce denunciation of the proposal to separate secular from religious education. Nor surely could the claim of the Irish Catholics be said even by the warmest advocate of undenominational education to have no reason on its side. The small minority of Protestants in Ireland had their college and their university established as a distinctively Protestant institution. Why should not the great majority who were Catholics ask for something of the same kind for themselves? Peel carried his measure; but the controversy has gone on ever since, and we have yet to see whether the scheme is a success or a failure.

One small instalment of justice to a much injured and long-suffering religious body was accomplished without any trouble by Sir Robert Peel's Government. This was the bill for removing the test by which Jews were excluded from certain municipal offices. A Jew might be high sheriff of a county, or Sheriff of London; but, with an inconsistency which was as ridiculous as it was narrow-minded, he was prevented from becoming a mayor, an alderman, or even a member of the Common Council. The oath which had to be taken included the words 'on the true faith of a Christian.' Lord Lyndhurst, the Lord Chancellor, introduced a measure to get rid of this absurd anomaly; and the House of Lords, who had firmly rejected similar proposals of relief before, passed it without any difficulty. It was of course passed by the House of Com-

mons, which had done its best to introduce the reform in previous sessions, and without success.

The Bank Charter Act, separating the issue from the banking department of the Bank of England, limiting the issue of notes to a fixed amount of securities, and requiring the whole of the further circulation to be on a basis of bullion, and prohibiting the formation of any new banks of issue, is a characteristic and an important measure of Peel's Government. To Peel, too, we owe the establishment of the income tax on its present basis—a doubtful boon. The copyright question was at least advanced a stage. Railways were regulated. The railway mania and railway panic also belong to this active period. The country went wild with railway speculation. The South Sea scheme was hardly more of a bubble or hardly burst more suddenly or disastrously. The vulgar and flashy successes of one or two lucky adventurers turned the heads of the whole community. For a time it seemed to be a national article of faith that the capacity of the country to absorb new railway schemes and make them profitable was unlimited, and that to make a fortune one had only to take shares in anything.

An odd feature of the time was the outbreak of what were called the Rebecca riots in Wales. These riots arose out of the anger and impatience of the people at the great increase of toll-bars and tolls on the public roads. Some one, it was supposed, had hit upon a passage in Genesis which supplies a motto for their grievance and their complaint. 'And they blessed Rebekah and said unto her . . . let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.' They set about accordingly to possess very effectually the gates of those which hated them. Mobs assembled every night, destroyed turnpikes and dispersed. They met with little molestation in most cases for a while. The mobs were always led by a man in woman's clothes, supposed to represent the typical Rebecca. As the disturbances went on, it was found that no easier mode of disguise could be got than a woman's clothes, and therefore in many of the riots petticoats might almost be said to be the uniform of the insurgent force. Night after night for months these midnight musterings took place. Rebecca and her daughters became the terror of many regions. As the work went on it became more serious. Rebecca and her daughters grew bold. There were conflicts with the police and with the soldiers. It is to be feared that men and even women died for Rebecca. At last the Government succeeded in putting down the riots, and had the wisdom to appoint a Commission to inquire into the cause of so much disturbance; and the Commission, as will readily be imagined, found that there were genuine grievances at the bottom of the popular excitement. The farmers

and the labourers were poor; the tolls were seriously oppressive. The Government dealt lightly with most of the rioters who had been captured, and introduced measures which removed the grievances most seriously complained of Rebecca and her daughters were heard of no more. They had made out their case, and done in their wild mumming way something of a good work. Only a short time before the rioters would have been shot down and the grievances would have been allowed to stand. Rebecca and her short career mark an advancement in the political and social history of England.

Sir James Graham, the Home Secretary, brought himself and the Government into some trouble by the manner in which he made use of the power invested in the Administration for the opening of private letters. Mr. Duncombe, the Radical member for Finsbury, presented a petition from Joseph Mazzini and others complaining that letters addressed to them had been opened in the Post Office. Many of Mazzini's friends, and perhaps Mazzini himself, believed that the contents of these letters had been communicated to the Sardinian and Austrian Governments, and that as a result men who were supposed to be implicated in projects of insurrection on the Continent had actually been arrested and put to death. Sir James Graham did not deny that he had issued a warrant authorising the opening of some of Mazzini's letters; but he contended that the right to open letters had been specially reserved to the Government on its responsibility, that it had always been exercised, but by him with special caution and moderation; and that it would be impossible for any Government absolutely to deprive itself of such a right. The public excitement was at first very great; but it soon subsided. The reports of Parliamentary committees appointed by the two Houses showed that all Governments had exercised the right, but naturally with decreasing frequency and greater caution of late years; and that there was no chance now of its being seriously abused. No one, not even Thomas Carlyle, who had written to the *Times* in generous indignation at the opening of Mazzini's letters, went so far as to say that such a right should never be exercised. Carlyle admitted that he would tolerate the practice 'when some new Gunpowder Plot may be in the wind, some double-dyed high treason or imminent national wreck not avoidable otherwise.' In the particular case of Mazzini it seemed an odious trick, and everyone was ashamed of it. Such a feeling was the surest guard against abuse for the future, and the matter was allowed to drop. The minister is to be pitied who is compelled even by legitimate necessity to have recourse to such an expedient; he would be despised now by every decent man if he turned to it without such justification. Many years had to pass away before Sir James Graham

was free from innuendoes and attacks on the ground that he had tampered with the correspondence of an exile. One remark, on the other hand, it is right to make. An exile is sheltered in a country like England on the assumption that he does not involve her in responsibility and danger by using her protection as a shield behind which to contrive plots and organise insurrections against foreign governments. It is certain that Mazzini did make use of the shelter England gave him for such a purpose. It would in the end be to the heavy injury of all fugitives from despotic rule, if to shelter them brought such consequences on the countries that offered them a home.

The Peel Administration was made memorable by many remarkable events at home as well as abroad. It had, as we have seen, inherited wars and brought them to a close: it had wars of its own. Scinde was annexed by Lord Ellenborough in consequence of the disputes which had arisen between us and the Ameers, whom we accused of having broken faith with us. They were said to be in correspondence with our enemies, which may possibly have been true, and to have failed to pay up our tribute, which was very likely. Anyhow we found occasion for an attack on Scinde; and the result was the total defeat of the Princes and their army, and the annexation of the territory. Sir Charles Napier won a splendid victory—splendid, that is, in a military sense—over an enemy outnumbering him by more than twelve to one at the battle of Meeanee; and Scinde was ours. Peel and his colleagues accepted the annexation. None of them liked it; but none saw how it could be undone. There was nothing to be proud of in the matter, except the courage of our soldiers, and the genius of Sir Charles Napier, one of the most brilliant, daring, successful, eccentric, and self-conceited captains who had ever fought in the service of England since the days of Peterborough. Later on the Sikhs invaded our territory by crossing the Sutlej in great force. Sir Hugh Gough, afterwards Lord Gough, fought several fierce battles with them before he could conquer them; and even then they were only conquered for the time.

We were at one moment apparently on the very verge of what must have proved a far more serious war much nearer home, in consequence of the dispute that arose between this country and France about Tahiti and Queen Pomare. Queen Pomare was sovereign of the island of Tahiti, in the South Pacific, the Otaheite of Captain Cook. She was a pupil of some of our missionaries, and was very friendly to England and its people. She had been induced or compelled to put herself and her dominion under the protection of France; a step which was highly displeasing to her subjects. Some ill-feeling towards the French residents of the island was shown; and the French admiral, who had induced or compelled the Queen to put

herself under French protection, now suddenly appeared off the coast, and called on her to hoist the French flag above her own. She refused; and he instantly effected a landing on the island, pulled down her flag, raised that of France in its place, and proclaimed that the island was French territory. The French admiral appears to have been a hot-headed, thoughtless sort of man, the Commodore Wilkes of his day. His act was at once disavowed by the French Government, and condemned in strong terms by M. Guizot. But Queen Pomare had appealed to the Queen of England for assistance. 'Do not cast me away, my friend,' she said; 'I run to you for refuge, to be covered under your great shadow, the same that afforded relief to my fathers by your fathers, who are now dead, and whose kingdoms have descended to us the weaker vessels.' A large party in France allowed themselves to become inflamed with the idea that British intrigue was at the bottom of the Tahiti people's dislike to the protectorate of France, and that England wanted to get Queen Pomare's dominions for herself. They cried out therefore that to take down the flag of France from its place in Tahiti would be to insult the dignity of the French nation, and to insult it at the instance of England. The cry was echoed in the shrillest tones by a great number of French newspapers. Where the flag of France has once been hoisted, they screamed, it must never be taken down; which is about equivalent to saying that if a man's officious servant carries off the property of some one else and gives it to his master, the master's dignity is lowered by his consenting to hand it back to its owner. In the face of this clamour the French Government, although they disavowed any share in the filibustering of their admiral, did not show themselves in great haste to undo what he had done. Possibly they found themselves in something of the same difficulty as the English Government in regard to the annexation of Scinde. They could not perhaps with great safety to themselves have ventured to be honest all at once; and in any case they did not want to give up the protectorate of Tahiti. While the more hot-headed on both sides of the English Channel were thus snarling at each other, the difficulty was immensely complicated by the seizure of a missionary named Pritchard, who had been our consul in the island up to the deposition of Pomare. A French sentinel had been attacked, or was said to have been attacked, in the night, and in consequence the French commandant seized Pritchard in reprisal, declaring him to be 'the only mover and instigator of disturbances among the natives.' Pritchard was flung into prison, and only released to be expelled from the island. He came home to England with his story; and his arrival was the signal for an outburst of indignation all over the country. Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen alike stigmatised the treatment of

Pritchard as a gross and intolerable outrage; and satisfaction was demanded of the French Government. The King and M. Guizot were both willing that full justice should be done, and both anxious to avoid any occasion of ill-feeling with England. The King had lately been receiving with effusive show of affection a visit from our Queen in France, and was about to return it. But so hot was popular passion on both sides, that it would have needed stronger and juster natures than those of the King and his minister to venture at once on doing the right thing. It was on the last day of the Session of 1844, September 5, that Sir Robert Peel was able to announce that the French Government had agreed to compensate Pritchard for his sufferings and losses. Queen Pomare was nominally restored to power, but the French protection proved as stringent as if it were a sovereign rule. She might as well have pulled down her flag, for all the sovereign right it secured to her. She died thirty-four years after, and her death recalled to the memory of the English public the long-forgotten fact that she had once so nearly been the cause of a war between England and France.

The Ashburton Treaty and the Oregon Treaty belong alike to the history of Peel's Administration. The Ashburton Treaty bears date August 9, 1842, and arranges finally the north-western boundary between the British Provinces of North America and the United States. For many years the want of any clear and settled understanding as to the boundary line between Canada and the State of Maine had been a source of some disturbance, and of much controversy. Arbitration between England and the United States had been tried and failed, both parties declining the award. Sir Robert Peel sent out Lord Ashburton, formerly Mr. Baring, as plenipotentiary, to Washington, in 1842, and by his intelligent exertions an arrangement was come to which appears to have given mutual satisfaction ever since, despite of the sinister prophesyings of Lord Palmerston at the time. The Oregon question was more complicated, and was the source of a longer controversy. More than once the dispute about the boundary line in the Oregon region had very nearly become an occasion for war between England and the United States. In Canning's time there was a crisis during which, to quote the words of an English statesman, war could have been brought about by the holding up of a finger. The question in dispute was as to the boundary line between English and American territory west of the Rocky Mountains. It had seemed a matter of little importance at one time, when the country west of the Rocky Mountains was regarded by most persons as little better than a desert idle. But when the vast capacities and the splendid future of the Pacific slope began to be recognised, and the importance to us of some station and harbour there

came to be more and more evident, the dispute naturally swelled into a question of vital interest to both nations. In 1818 an attempt at arrangement was made, but failed. The two governments then agreed to leave the disputed regions to joint occupation for ten years, after which the subject was to be opened again. When the end of the first term came near, Canning did his best to bring about a settlement, but failed. The dispute involved the ownership of the mouth of the Columbia River, and of the noble island which bears the name of Vancouver, off the shore of British Columbia. The joint occupancy was renewed for an indefinite time; but in 1843, the President of the United States somewhat peremptorily called for a final settlement of the boundary. The question was eagerly taken up by excitable politicians in the American House of Representatives. For more than two years the Oregon question became a party cry in America. With a large proportion of the American public, including, of course, nearly all citizens of Irish birth or extraction, any President would have been popular beyond measure who had forced a war on England. Calmer and wiser counsels prevailed, however, on both sides. Lord Aberdeen, our Foreign Secretary, was especially moderate and conciliatory. He offered a compromise which was at last accepted. On June 15, 1846, the Oregon Treaty settled the question for that time at least; the dividing line was to be 'the forty-ninth degree of latitude, from the Rocky Mountains west to the middle of the channel separating Vancouver's Island from the mainland; thence southerly through the middle of the channel and of Fuca's Straits to the Pacific.' The channel and straits were to be free, as also the great northern branch of the Columbia River. In other words, Vancouver's Island remained to Great Britain, and the free navigation of the Columbia River was secured. We have said that the question was settled, 'for that time;' because an important part of it came up again for settlement many years after. The commissioners appointed to determine that portion of the boundary which was to run southerly through the middle of the channel were unable to come to any agreement on the subject, and the divergence of the claims made on one side and the other constituted a new question, which became a part of the famous Treaty of Washington in 1871, and was finally settled by the arbitration of the Emperor of Germany. But it is much to the honour of the Peel Administration that a dispute which had for years been charged with possibilities of war, and had become a stock subject of political agitation in America, should have been so far settled as to be removed for ever after out of the category of disputes which suggest an appeal to arms. This was one of the last acts of Peel's Government, and it was not the least of the great things he had done. We have soon to tell how it came about that

it was one of his latest triumphs, and how an Administration which had come into power with such splendid promise, and had accomplished so much in such various fields of legislation, was brought so suddenly to a fall. The story is one of the most remarkable and important chapters in the history of English politics and parties.

During Peel's time we catch a last glimpse of the famous Arctic navigator, Sir John Franklin. He sailed on the expedition which was doomed to be his last, on May 26, 1845, with his two vessels, *Erebus* and *Terror*. Not much more is heard of him as among the living. We may say of him as Carlyle says of La Pérouse, 'The brave navigator goes and returns not; the seekers search far seas for him in vain; only some mournful mysterious shadow of him hovers long in all heads and hearts.'

## CHAPTER XIV.

### FREE TRADE AND THE LEAGUE.

Few chapters of political history in modern times have given occasion for more controversy than that which contains the story of Sir Robert Peel's Administration in its dealing with the Corn Laws. Told in the briefest form, the story is that Peel came into office in 1841 to maintain the Corn Laws, and that in 1846 he repealed them. The controversy as to the wisdom or unwisdom of repealing the Corn Laws has long since come to an end. They who were the uncompromising opponents of Free Trade at that time are proud to call themselves its uncompromising zealots now. Indeed, there is no more chance of a reaction against Free Trade in England than there is of a reaction against the rule of three. But the controversy still exists, and will probably always be in dispute, as to the conduct of Sir Robert Peel.

The Melbourne Ministry fell, as we have seen, in consequence of a direct vote of want of confidence moved by their leading opponent, and the return of a majority hostile to them at the general election that followed. The vote of want of confidence was levelled against their financial policy, especially against Lord John Russell's proposal to substitute a fixed duty of eight shillings for Peel's sliding scale. Sir Robert Peel came into office, and he introduced a reorganised scheme of a sliding scale, reducing the duties and improving the system, but maintaining the principle. Lord John Russell proposed an amendment declaring that the House of Commons, 'considering the evils which have been caused by the present Corn Laws, and especially by the fluctuations in the graduated or sliding scale, is not

prepared to adopt the measure of her Majesty's Government, which is founded on the same principles, and is likely to be attended by similar results.' The amendment was rejected by a large majority, no less than one hundred and twenty-three. But the question between Free Trade and Protection was even more distinctly raised. Mr. Villiers proposed another amendment declaring for the entire abolition of all duties on grain. Only ninety votes were given for the amendment, while three hundred and ninety-three were recorded against it. Sir Robert Peel's Government, therefore, came into power distinctly pledged to uphold the principle of protection for home-grown grain. Four years after this Sir Robert Peel proposed the total abolition of the corn duties. For this he was denounced by some members of his party in language more fierce and unmeasured than ever since has been applied to any leading statesman. Mr. Gladstone was never assailed by the staunchest supporter of the Irish Church in words so vituperative as those which rated Sir Robert Peel for his supposed apostacy. One eminent person at least made his first fame as a Parliamentary orator by his denunciations of the great Minister whom he had previously eulogised and supported.

'The history of agricultural distress,' it has been well observed, 'is the history of agricultural abundance.' This looks at first sight a paradox; but nothing can in reality be more plain and less paradoxical. 'Whenever,' to follow out the passage, 'Providence, through the blessing of genial seasons, fills the nation's stores with plenteousness, then and then only has the cry of ruin to the cultivator been proclaimed as the one great evil for legislation to repress.' This is indeed the very meaning of the principle of protection. When the commodity which the protected interest has to dispose of is so abundant as to be easily attained by the common body of consumers, then of course the protected interest is injured in its particular way of making money, and expects the State to do something to secure it in the principal advantage of its monopoly. The greater quantity of grain a good harvest brings for the benefit of all the people, the less the price the corn-grower can charge for it. His interest as a monopolist is always and inevitably opposed to the interest of the community.

But it is easy even now, when we have almost forgotten the days of protection, to see that the corn-grower is not likely either to recognise or to admit this conflict of interests between his protection and the public welfare. Apart from the natural tendency of every man to think that that which does him good must do good to the community, there was undoubtedly something very fascinating in the theory of protection. It had a charming give and take, live and let live, air about it. 'You give me a little more than the market price for my corn, and don't you see I shall be

able to buy all the more of your cloth and tea and sugar, or to pay you the higher rent for your land?' Such a compact seems reasonable and tempting. Almost up to our own time the legislation of the country was in the hands of the classes who had more to do with the growing of corn and the ownership of land than with the making of cotton and the working of machinery. The great object of legislation and of social compacts of whatever kind seemed to be to keep the rents of the landowners and prices of the farmers up to a comfortable standard. It is not particularly to the discredit of the landlords and the farmers that this was so. We have seen in later times how every class in succession has resisted the movement of the principle of free trade when it came to be applied to its own particular interests. The paper manufacturers liked it as little in 1860 as the landlords and farmers had done fifteen years earlier. When the cup comes to be commended to the lips of each interest in turn, we always find that it is received as a poisoned chalice, and taken with much shuddering and passionate protestation. The particular advantage possessed by vested interests in the Corn Laws was that for a long time the landlords possessed all the legislative power and all the *prestige* as well. There was a certain reverence and sanctity about the ownership of land, with its hereditary descent and its patriarchal dignities, which the manufacture of paper could not pretend to claim.

If it really were true that the legitimate incomes or the legitimate influence of the landlord class in England went down in any way because of the repeal of the Corn Laws, it would have to be admitted that the landlords, like the aristocrats before the French Revolution, had done something themselves to encourage the growth of new and disturbing ideas. Before the Revolution, free thought and the equality and brotherhood of man were beginning to be pet doctrines among the French nobles and their wives and daughters. It was the whim of the hour to talk Rousseau, and to affect indifference to rank and a general faith in a good time coming of equality and brotherhood. In something of the same fashion the aristocracy of England were for some time before the repeal of the Corn Laws illustrating a sort of revival of patriarchal ideas about the duties of property. The influence was stirring everywhere. Oxford was beginning to busy itself in the revival of the olden influence of the Church. The Young England party, as they were then called, were ardent to restore the good old days when the noble was the father of the poor and the chief of his neighbourhood. All manner of pretty whimsies were caught up by this ruling idea to give them an appearance of earnest purpose. The young landlord exhibited himself in the attitude of a protector, patron and friend to all his tenants. Doles were formally given at stated hours to all who

would come for them to the castle gate. Young noblemen played cricket with the peasants on their estate, and the Saturnian age was believed by a good many persons to be returning for the express benefit of Old, or rather of Young, England. There was something like a party being formed in Parliament for the realisation of Young England's idyllic purposes. It comprised among its members several more or less gifted youths of rank, who were full of enthusiasm and poetic aspirations and nonsense; and it had the encouragement and support of one man of genius, who had no natural connection with the English aristocracy, but who was afterwards destined to be the successful leader of the Conservative and aristocratic party; to be its saviour when it was all but down in the dust; to guide it to victory, and make it once more, for the time at least, supreme in the political life of the country. This brilliant champion of Conservatism has often spoken of the repeal of the Corn Laws as the fall of the landlord class in England. If the landlords fell, it must be said of them, as has been fairly said of many a dynasty, that they never deserved better on the whole than just at the time when the blow struck them down.

The famous Corn Law of 1815 was a copy of the Corn Law of 1670. The former measure imposed a duty on the importation of foreign grain which amounted to prohibition. Wheat might be exported upon the payment of one shilling per quarter customs duty; but importation was practically prohibited until the price of wheat had reached eighty shillings a quarter. The Corn Law of 1815 was hurried through Parliament, absolutely closing the ports against the importation of foreign grain until the price of our home-grown grain had reached the magic figure of eighty shillings a quarter. It was hurried through, despite the most earnest petitions from the commercial and manufacturing classes. A great deal of popular disturbance attended the passing of the measure. There were riots in London, and the houses of several of the supporters of the bill were attacked. Incendiary fires blazed in many parts of the country. In the Isle of Ely there were riots which lasted for two days and two nights, and the aid of the military had to be called in to suppress them. Five persons were hanged as the result of these disturbances. One might excuse a demagogue who compared the event to the suppression of some of the food riots in France just before the Revolution, of which we only read that the people—the poor, that is to say—turned out demanding bread, and the ringleaders were immediately hanged, and there was an end of the matter. After the Corn Law of 1815, thus ominously introduced, there were Sliding Scale Acts, having for their business to establish a varying system of duty, so that, according as the price of home-produced wheat rose to a certain height, the duty on imported wheat sank in pro-

portion. The principle of all these measures was the same. It was founded on the assumption that the corn grew for the benefit of the grower first of all; and that until he had been secured in a handsome profit the public at large had no right to any reduction in the cost of food. When the harvest was a good one, and the golden grain was plenty, then the soul of the grower was afraid, and he called out to Parliament to protect him against the calamity of having to sell his corn any cheaper than he did in years of famine. He did not see all the time that if the prosperity of the country in general was enhanced, he too must come to benefit by it.

Naturally, it was in places like Manchester that the fallacy of all this theory was first commonly perceived and most warmly resented. The Manchester manufacturers saw that the customers for their goods were to be found in all parts of the world; and they knew that at every turn they were hampered in their dealings with the customers by the system of protective duties. They wanted to sell their goods wherever they could find buyers, and they chafed at any barrier between them and the sale. Manchester, from the time of its first having Parliamentary representation—only a few years before the foundation of the Anti-Corn Law League—had always spoken out for Free Trade. The fascinating sophism which had such charms for other communities, that by paying more than was actually necessary for everything all round, Dick enriched Tom, while Tom was at the same time enriching Dick, had no charms for the intelligence and the practical experience of Manchester. The close of the year 1836 was a period of stagnant trade and general depression, arising, in some parts of the country, to actual and severe suffering. Some members of Parliament and other influential men were stricken with the idea, which it does not seem to have required much strength of observation to foster, that it could not be for the advantage of the country in general to have the price of bread very high at a time when wages were very low and work was scarce. A movement against the Corn Laws began in London. An Anti-Corn Law Association on a small scale was formed. Its list of members bore the names of more than twenty members of Parliament, and for a time the society had a look of vigour about it. It came to nothing, however. London has never been found an effective nursery of agitation. It is too large to have any central interest or source of action. It is too dependent socially and economically on the patronage of the higher and wealthier classes. London has never been to England what Paris has been to France. It has hardly ever made or represented thoroughly the public opinion of England during any great crisis. A new centre of operations soon had to be sought, and various causes combined to make Lancashire the proper place. In the year 1838 the town of Bolton-le-

Moors, in Lancashire, was the victim of a terrible commercial crisis. Thirty out of the fifty manufacturing establishments which the town contained were closed; nearly a fourth of all the houses of business were closed and actually deserted; and more than five thousand workmen were without homes or means of subsistence. All the intelligence and energy of Lancashire was roused. One obvious guarantee against starvation was cheap bread, and cheap bread meant of course the abolition of the Corn Laws, for these laws were constructed on the principle that it was necessary to keep bread dear. A meeting was held in Manchester to consider measures necessary to be adopted for bringing about the complete repeal of these Laws. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce adopted a petition to Parliament against the Corn Laws. The Anti-Corn Law agitation had been fairly launched.

From that time it grew and grew in importance and strength. Meetings were held in various towns of England and Scotland. Associations were formed everywhere to co-operate with the movement which had its headquarters in Manchester. In Newall's Buildings, Market Street, Manchester, the work of the League was really done for years. The leaders of the movement gave up their time day by day to its service. The League had to encounter a great deal of rather fierce opposition from the Chartists, who loudly proclaimed that the whole movement was only meant to entrap them once more into an alliance with the middle classes and the employers, as in the case of the Reform Bill, in order that when they had been made the cat's-paw again they might again be thrown contemptuously aside. On the other hand, the League had from the first the cordial co-operation of Daniel O'Connell, who became one of their principal orators when they held meetings in the metropolis. They issued pamphlets by hundreds of thousands, and sent lecturers all over the country explaining the principles of Free Trade. A gigantic propaganda of Free Trade opinions was called into existence. Money was raised by the holding of bazaars in Manchester and in London, and by calling for subscriptions. A bazaar in Manchester brought in ten thousand pounds; one in London raised rather more than double that sum, not including the subscriptions that were contributed. A Free Trade Hall was built in Manchester. This building had an interesting history full of good omen for the cause. The ground on which the hall was erected was the property of Mr. Cobden, and was placed by him at the disposal of the League. That ground was the scene of what was known in Manchester as the Massacre of Peterloo. On August 16, 1819, a meeting of Manchester Reformers was held on that spot, which was dispersed by an attack of soldiers and militia, with the loss of many lives. The memory of that

day rankled in the hearts of the Manchester Liberals for long after, and perhaps no better means could be found for purifying the ground from the stain and the shame of such bloodshed than its dedication by the modern apostle of peace and Free Trade as a site whereon to build a hall sacred to the promulgation of his favourite doctrines.

The times were peculiarly favourable to the new sort of propaganda which came into being with the Anti-Corn Law League. A few years before such an agitation would hardly have found the means of making its influence felt all over the country. The very reduction of the cost of postage alone must have facilitated its labours to an extent beyond calculation. The inundation of the country with pamphlets, tracts, and reports of speeches would have been scarcely possible under the old system, and would in any case have swallowed up a far larger amount of money than even the League with its ample resources would have been able to supply. In all parts of the country railways were being opened, and these enabled the lecturers of the League to hasten from town to town and to keep the cause always alive in the popular mind. All these advantages and many others might, however, have proved of little avail if the League had not from the first been in the hands of men who seemed as if they came by special appointment to do its work. Great as the work was which the League did, it will be remembered in England almost as much because of the men who won the success as on account of the success itself.

The nominal leader of the Free Trade party in Parliament was for many years Mr. Charles Villiers, a man of aristocratic family and surroundings, of remarkable ability, and of the steadiest fidelity to the cause he had undertaken. Nothing is a more familiar phenomenon in the history of English political agitation than the aristocrat who assumes the popular cause and cries out for the 'rights' of the 'unenfranchised millions.' But it was something new to find a man of Mr. Villiers' class devoting himself to a cause so entirely practical and business-like as that of the repeal of the Corn Laws. Mr. Villiers brought forward for several successive sessions in the House of Commons a motion in favour of the total repeal of the Corn Laws. His eloquence and his argumentative power served the great purpose of drawing the attention of the country to the whole question, and making converts to the principle he advocated. The House of Commons has always of late years been the best platform from which to address the country. In political agitation it has thus been made to prepare the way for the schemes of legislation which it has itself always begun by reprobating. But Mr. Villiers might have gone on for all his life dividing the House of Commons on the question of Free Trade, without getting much nearer to his object, if it were not for the manner in which the

cause was taken up by the country, and more particularly by the great manufacturing towns of the North. Until the passing of Lord Grey's Reform Bill these towns had no representation in Parliament. They seemed destined after that event to make up for their long exclusion from representative influence by taking the government of the country into their own hands. Of late years they have lost some of their relative influence. They have not now all the power that for no inconsiderable time they undoubtedly possessed. The reforms they chiefly aimed at have been carried, and the spirit which in times of stress and struggle kept their populations almost of one mind has less necessity of existence now. Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds are no whit less important to the life of the nation now than they were before Free Trade. But their supremacy does not exist now as it did then. At that time it was town against country; Manchester representing the town, and the whole Conservative (at one period almost the whole landowning) body representing the country. The Manchester school, as it was called, then and for long after had some teachers and leaders who were of themselves capable of making any school powerful and respected. With the Manchester school began a new kind of popular agitation. Up to that time agitation meant appeal to passion, and lived by provoking passion. Its cause might be good or bad, but the way of promoting it was the same. The Manchester school introduced the agitation which appealed to reason and argument only; which stirred men's hearts with figures of arithmetic, rather than figures of speech, and which converted mob meetings to political economy.

The real leader of the movement was Mr. Richard Cobden. Mr. Cobden was a man belonging to the yeoman class. He had received but a moderate education. His father dying while the great Free Trader was still young, Richard Cobden was taken in charge by an uncle, who had a wholesale warehouse in the City of London, and who gave him employment there. Cobden afterwards became a partner in a Manchester printed cotton factory; and he travelled occasionally on the commercial business of this establishment. He had a great liking for travel; but not by any means as the ordinary tourist travels; the interest of Cobden was not in scenery, or in art, or in ruins, but in men. He studied the condition of countries with a view to the manner in which it affected the men and women of the present, and through them was likely to affect the future. On everything that he saw he turned a quick and intelligent eye; and he saw for himself and thought for himself. Wherever he went he wanted to learn something. He had in abundance that peculiar faculty which some great men of widely different stamp to him and from each other have possessed; of which Goethe frankly boasted, and which Mirabeau

had more largely than he was always willing to acknowledge: the faculty which exacts from everyone with whom its owner comes into contact some contribution to his stock of information and to his advantage. Cobden could learn something from everybody. It is doubtful whether he ever came even into momentary acquaintance with anyone whom he did not compel to yield him something in the way of information. He travelled very widely for a time when travelling was more difficult work than it is at present. He made himself familiar with most of the countries of Europe, with many parts of the East, and, what was then a rarer accomplishment, with the United States and Canada. He did not make the familiar grand tour and then dismiss the places he had seen from his active memory. He studied them and visited many of them again to compare early with later impressions. This was in itself an education of the highest value for the career he proposed to pursue. When he was about thirty years of age he began to acquire a certain reputation as the author of pamphlets directed against some of the pet doctrines of old-fashioned statesmanship: the balance of power in Europe; the necessity of maintaining a State Church in Ireland; the importance of allowing no European quarrel to go on without England's intervention; and similar dogmas. Mr. Cobden's opinions then were very much as they continued to the day of his death. He seemed to have come to the maturity of his convictions all at once, and to have passed through no further change either of growth or of decay. But whatever might be said then or now of the doctrines he maintained, there could be only one opinion as to the skill and force which upheld them with pen as well as tongue. The tongue, however, was his best weapon. If oratory were a business and not an art—that is, if its test were its success rather than its form—then it might be contended reasonably enough that Mr. Cobden was one of the greatest orators England has ever known. Nothing could exceed the persuasiveness of his style. His manner was simple, sweet and earnest. It was persuasive, but it had not the sort of persuasiveness which is merely a better kind of plausibility. It persuaded by convincing. It was transparently sincere. The light of its convictions shone all through it. It aimed at the reason and the judgment of the listener, and seemed to be convincing him to his own interest against his prejudices. Cobden's style was almost exclusively conversational, but he had a clear, well-toned voice, with a quiet unassuming power in it which enabled him to make his words heard distinctly and without effort all through the great meetings he had often to address. His speeches were full of variety. He illustrated every argument by something drawn from his personal observation or from reading, and his illustrations were always striking, appropriate,

and interesting. He had a large amount of bright and winning humour, and he spoke the simplest and purest English. He never used an unnecessary sentence or failed for a single moment in making his meaning clear. Many strong opponents of Mr. Cobden's opinions confessed even during his lifetime that they sometimes found with dismay their most cherished convictions crumbling away beneath his flow of easy argument. In the stormy times of national passion Mr. Cobden was less powerful. When the question was one to be settled by the rules that govern man's substantial interests, or even by the standing rules, if such an expression may be allowed, of morality, then Cobden was unequalled. So long as the controversy could be settled after this fashion—'I will show you that in such a course you are acting injuriously to your own interests;' or 'You are doing what a fair and just man ought not to do'—so long as argument of that kind could sway the conduct of men, then there was no one who could convince as Cobden could. But when the hour and mood of passion came, and a man or a nation said, 'I do not care any longer whether this is for my interest or not—I don't care whether you call it right or wrong—this way my instincts drive me, and this way I am going'—then Mr. Cobden's teaching, the very perfection as it was of common sense and fair play, was out of season. It could not answer feeling with feeling. It was not able to 'overcrow,' in the word of Shakespeare and Spenser, one emotion by another. The defect of Mr. Cobden's style of mind and temper is fitly illustrated in the deficiency of his method of argument. His sort of education, his modes of observation, his way of turning travel to account, all went together to make him the man he was. The apostle of common sense and fair dealing, he had no sympathy with the passions of men; he did not understand them; they passed for nothing in his calculations. His judgment of men and of nations was based far too much on his knowledge of his own motives and character. He knew that in any given case he could always trust himself to act the part of a just and prudent man; and he assumed that all the world could be governed by the rules of prudence and of equity. History had little interest for him, except as it testified to man's advancement and steady progress, and furnished arguments to show that men prospered by liberty, peace and just dealings with their neighbours. He cared little or nothing for mere sentiments. Even where these had their root in some human tendency that was noble in itself, he did not reverence them if they seemed to stand in the way of men's acting peacefully and prudently. He did not see why the mere idea of nationality, for example, should induce people to disturb themselves by insurrections and wars, so long as they were tolerably well governed, and allowed to exist in peace and to make an honest living.

Thus he never represented more than half the English character. He was always out of sympathy with his countrymen on some great political question.

But he seemed as if he were designed by nature to conduct to success such an agitation as that against the Corn Laws. He found some colleagues who were worthy of him. His chief companion in the campaign was Mr. Bright. Mr. Bright's fame is not so completely bound up with the repeal of the Corn Laws, or even with the extension of the suffrage, as that of Mr. Cobden. If Mr. Bright had been on the wrong side of every cause he pleaded; if his agitation had been as conspicuous for failure as it was for success, he would still be famous among English public men. He was what Mr. Cobden was not, an orator of the very highest class. It is doubtful whether English public life has ever produced a man who possessed more of the qualifications of a great orator than Mr. Bright. He had a commanding presence; not indeed the stately and colossal form of O'Connell, but a massive figure, a large head, a handsome and expressive face. His voice was powerful, resonant, clear, with a peculiar vibration in it which lent unspeakable effect to any passages of pathos or of scorn. His style of speaking was exactly what a conventional demagogue's ought not to be. It was pure to austerity; it was stripped of all superfluous ornament. It never gushed or foamed. It never allowed itself to be mastered by passion. The first peculiarity that struck the listener was its superb self-restraint. The orator at his most powerful passages appeared as if he were rather keeping in his strength than taxing it with effort. His voice was for the most part calm and measured; he hardly ever indulged in much gesticulation. He never under the pressure of whatever emotion shouted or stormed. The fire of his eloquence was a white heat; intense, consuming, but never sparkling or sputtering. He had an admirable gift of humour and a keen ironical power. He had read few books, but of those he read he was a master. The English Bible and Milton were his chief studies. His style was probably formed for the most part on the Bible; for although he may have moulded his general way of thinking and his simple strong morality on the lessons he found in Milton, his mere language bore little trace of Milton's stately classicism, with its Hellenized and Latinized terminology, but was above all things Saxon and simple. Bright was a man of the middle class. His family were Quakers of a somewhat austere mould. They were manufacturers of carpets in Rochdale, Lancashire, and had made considerable money in their business. John Bright therefore was raised above the temptations which often beset the eloquent young man who takes up a democratic cause in a country like ours; and as our public opinion goes

it probably was to his advantage when first he made his appearance in Parliament that he was well known to be a man of some means, and not a clever and needy adventurer.

Mr. Bright himself has given an interesting account of his first meeting with Mr. Cobden:—

'The first time I became acquainted with Mr. Cobden was in connection with the great question of education. I went over to Manchester to call upon him and invite him to come to Rochdale to speak at a meeting about to be held in the school-room of the Baptist Chapel in West Street. I found him in his counting-house. I told him what I wanted; his countenance lighted up with pleasure to find that others were working in the same cause. He without hesitation agreed to come. He came and he spoke; and though he was then so young a speaker, yet the qualities of his speech were such as remained with him so long as he was able to speak at all—clearness, logic, a conversational eloquence, a persuasiveness which when combined with the absolute truth there was in his eye and in his countenance, became a power it was almost impossible to resist.'

Still more remarkable is the description Mr. Bright has given of Cobden's first appeal to him to join in the agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws:—

'I was in Leamington, and Mr. Cobden called on me. I was then in the depths of grief—I may almost say of despair, for the light and sunshine of my house had been extinguished. All that was left on earth of my young wife, except the memory of a sainted life and a too brief happiness, was lying still and cold in the chamber above us. Mr. Cobden called on me as his friend, and addressed me, as you may suppose, with words of condolence. After a time he looked up and said: 'There are thousands and thousands of homes in England at this moment where wives and mothers and children are dying of hunger. Now, when the first paroxysm of your grief is passed, I would advise you to come with me, and we will never rest until the Corn Laws are repealed.'

The invitation thus given was cordially accepted, and from that time dates the almost unique fellowship of these two men; who worked together in the closest brotherhood, who loved each other as not all brothers do, who were associated so closely in the public mind that until Cobden's death the name of one was scarcely ever mentioned without that of the other. There was something positively romantic about their mutual attachment. Each led a noble life; each was in his own way a man of genius; each was simple and strong. Rivalry between them would have been impossible, although they were every day being compared and contrasted by both friendly and unfriendly critics. Their gifts were admir-

ably suited to make them powerful allies. Each had something that the other wanted. Bright had not Cobden's winning persuasiveness nor his surprising ease and force of argument. But Cobden had not anything like his companion's oratorical power. He had not the tones of scorn, of pathos, of humour, and of passion. The two together made a genuine power in the House of Commons and on the platform. Mr. Kinglake, who is as little in sympathy with the general political opinions of Cobden and Bright as any man well could be, has borne admirable testimony to their argumentative power and to their influence over the House of Commons: 'These two orators had shown with what a strength, with what a masterly skill, with what patience, with what a high courage they could carry a scientific truth through the storms of politics. They had shown that they could arouse and govern the assenting thousands who listened to them with delight—that they could bend the House of Commons —that they could press their creed upon a Prime Minister, and put upon his mind so hard a stress, that after a while he felt it to be a torture and a violence to his reason to have to make a stand against them. Nay, more. Each of these gifted men had proved that he could go bravely into the midst of angry opponents, could show them their fallacies one by one, destroy their favourite theories before their very faces, and triumphantly argue them down.' It was indeed a scientific truth which in the first instance Cobden and Bright undertook to force upon the recognition of a Parliament composed in great measure of the very men who were taught to believe that their own personal and class interests were bound up with the maintenance of the existing economical creed. Those who hold that because it was a scientific truth the task of its advocates ought to have been easy, will do well to observe the success of the resistance which has been thus far offered to it in almost every country but England alone.

These men had many assistants and lieutenants well worthy to act with them and under them. Mr. W. J. Fox, for instance, a Unitarian minister of great popularity and remarkable eloquence, seemed at one time almost to divide public admiration as an orator with Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright. Mr. Milner Gibson, who had been a Tory, went over to the movement, and gave it the assistance of trained Parliamentary knowledge and very considerable debating skill. In the Lancashire towns the League had the advantage of being officered for the most part by shrewd and sound men of business, who gave their time as freely as they gave their money to the advancement of the cause. It is curious to compare the manner in which the Anti-Corn Law agitation was conducted with the manner in which the contemporary agitation in Ireland for Repeal of the

Union was carried on. In England the agitation was based on the most strictly business principles. The leaders spoke and acted as if the League itself were some great commercial firm, which was bound above all things to fulfil its promises and keep to the letter as well as the spirit of its engagements. There was no boasting; there was no exaggeration; there were no appeals to passion; no romantic rousings of sentimental emotion. The system of the agitation was as clear, straightforward and business-like as its purpose. In Ireland there were monster meetings with all manner of dramatic and theatric effects; with rhetorical exaggeration and vehement appeal to passion and to ancient memory of suffering. The cause was kept up from day to day by assurances of near success so positive that it is sometimes hard to believe those who made them could themselves have been deceived by them. No doubt the difference will be described by many as the mere result of the difference between the one cause and the other; between the agitation for Free Trade, clear, tangible and practical, and that for Repeal of the Union with its shadowy object and its visionary impulses. But a better explanation of the difference will be found in the different natures to which an appeal had to be made. It is not by any means certain that O'Connell's cause was a mere shadow; nor will it appear, if we study the criticism of the time, that the guides of public opinion who pronounced the Repeal agitation absurd and ludicrous had any better words at first for the movement against the Corn Laws. Cobden and Bright on the one side, O'Connell on the other, knew the audiences they had to address. It would have been impossible to stir the blood of the Lancashire artisan by means of the appeals which went to the very heart of the dreamy, sentimental impassioned Celt of the South of Ireland. The Munster peasant would have understood little of such clear, penetrating business-like argument as that by which Cobden and Bright enforced their doctrines. Had O'Connell's cause been as practical and its success been as immediately attainable as that of the Anti-Corn Law League, the great Irish agitator would still have had to address his followers in a different tone of appeal. 'All men are not alike,' says the Norman butler to the Flemish soldier in Scott's 'Betrothed:' 'that which will but warm your Flemish hearts will put wildfire into Norman brains; and what may only encourage your countrymen to man the walls, will make ours fly over the battlements.' The most impassioned Celt, however, will admit that in the Anti-Corn Law movement of Cobden and Bright, with its rigid truthfulness and its strict proportion between capacity and promise, there was an entirely new dignity lent to popular agitation which raised it to the condition of statesmanship in the rough. The reform agitation in England had not been conducted without some exaggeration,

much appeal to passion, and some not by any means indistinct allusion to the reserve of popular force which might be called into action if legislators and peers proved insensible to argument. The era of the Anti-Corn Law movement was a new epoch altogether in English political controversy.

The League, however, successful as it might be throughout the country, had its great work to do in Parliament. The Free Trade leaders must have found their hearts sink within them when they came sometimes to confront that fortress of traditions and of vested rights. Even after the change made in favour of manufacturing and middle class interests by the Reform Bill, the House of Commons was still composed, as to nine-tenths of its whole number, by representatives of the landlords. The entire House of Lords was then constituted of the owners of land. All tradition, all prestige, all the dignity of aristocratic institutions, seemed to be naturally arrayed against the new movement, conducted as it was by manufacturers and traders for the benefit seemingly of trade and those whom it employed. The artisan population who might have been formidable as a disturbing element were, on the whole, rather against the Free Traders than for them. Nearly all the great official leaders had to be converted to the doctrines of Free Trade. Many of the Whigs were willing enough to admit the case of Free Trade as the young Scotch lady mentioned by Sydney Smith admitted the case of love 'in the abstract;' but they could not recognise the possibility of applying it in the complicated financial conditions of an artificial system like ours. Some of the Whigs were in favour of a fixed duty in place of the existing sliding scale. The leaders of the movement had indeed to resist a very dangerous temptation coming from statesmen who professed to be in accordance with them as to the mere principle of protection, but who were always endeavouring to persuade them that they had better accept any decent compromise and not push their demands to extremes. The witty peer who in a former generation answered an advocate of moderate reform by asking him what he thought of moderate chastity, might have had many opportunities, if he had been engaged in the Free Trade movement, of turning his epigram to account.

Mr. Macaulay, for instance, wrote to the electors of Edinburgh to remonstrate with them on what he considered their fanatical and uncompromising adherence to the principle of Free Trade. 'In my opinion,' Mr. Macaulay wrote to his constituents, 'you are all wrong—not because you think all protection bad, for I think so too; not even because you avow your opinion and attempt to propagate it; for I have always done the same, and shall do the same: but because, being in a situation where your only hope is in a compromise, you refuse to hear of compromise;

because, being in a situation where every person who will go a step with you on the right road ought to be cordially welcomed, you drive from you those who are willing and desirous to go with you half way. To this policy I will be no party. I will not abandon those with whom I have hitherto acted, and without whose help I am confident that no great improvement can be effected, for an object purely selfish.' It had not occurred to Mr. Macaulay that any party but the Whigs could bring in any measure of fiscal or other reform worth the having; and indeed he probably thought it would be something like an act of ingratitude amounting to a species of sacrilege to accept reform from any hands but those of its recognised Whig patrons. The Anti-Corn Law agitation introduced a game of politics into England which astonished and considerably discomfited steady-going politicians like Macaulay. The League men did not profess to be bound by any indefeasible bond of allegiance to the Whig party. They were prepared to co-operate with any party whatever which would undertake to abolish the Corn-Laws. Their agitation would have done some good in this way, if in no other sense. It introduced a more robust and independent spirit into political life. It is almost ludicrous sometimes to read the diatribes of supporters of Lord Melbourne's Government, for example, against anyone who should presume to think that any object in the mind of a true patriot, or at least of a true Liberal, could equal in importance that of keeping the Melbourne Ministry in power. Great reforms have been made by Conservative Governments in our own days, because the new political temper which was growing up in England refused to affirm that the patent of reform rested in the possession of any particular party, and that if the holders of the monopoly did not find it convenient, or were not in the humour, to use it any further just then, no one else must venture to interfere in the matter, or to undertake the duty which they had declined to perform. At the time that Macaulay wrote his letter, however, it had not entered into the mind of any Whig to believe it possible that the repeal of the Corn Laws was to be the work of a great Conservative minister, done at the bidding of two Radical politicians.

It is a significant fact that the Anti-Corn Law League were not in the least discouraged by the accession of Sir Robert Peel to power. To them the fixed duty proposed by Lord John Russell was as objectionable as Peel's sliding scale. Their hopes seem rather to have gone up than gone down when the minister came into power whose adherents, unlike those of Lord John Russell, were absolutely against the very principle of Free Trade. It is of some importance in estimating the morality of the course pursued by Peel to observe the opinion formed of his professions and his

probable purposes by the shrewd men who led the Anti-Corn Law League. The grand charge against Peel is that he betrayed his party; that he induced them to continue their allegiance to him on the promise that he would never concede the principle of Free Trade; and that he used his power to establish Free Trade when the time came to choose between it and a surrender of office. Now it is certain that the League always regarded Sir Robert Peel as a Free Trader in heart; as one who fully admitted the principle of Free Trade, but who did not see his way just then to deprive the agricultural interest of the protection on which they had for so many years been allowed and encouraged to lean. In the debate after the general election of 1841, the debate which turned out the Melbourne Ministry, Mr. Cobden, then for the first time a member of the House of Commons, said: 'I am a Free Trader; I call myself neither Whig nor Tory. I am proud to acknowledge the virtue of the Whig Ministry in coming out from the ranks of the monopolists and advancing three parts out of four in my own direction. Yet if the right honourable baronet opposite (Sir R. Peel) advances one step further, I will be the first to meet him half way, and shake hands with him.' Some years later Mr. Cobden said at Birmingham, 'There can be no doubt that Sir Robert Peel is, at heart, as good a Free Trader as I am. He has told us so in the House of Commons again and again; nor do I doubt that Sir Robert Peel has in his inmost heart the desire to be the man who shall carry out the principles of Free Trade in this country.' Sir Robert Peel had indeed, as Mr. Cobden said, again and again in Parliament expressed his conviction as to the general truth of the principles of Free Trade. In 1842, he declared it to be utterly beyond the power of Parliament, and a mere delusion, to say that by any duty, fixed or otherwise, a certain price could be guaranteed to the producer. In the same year he expressed his belief that, 'on the general principle of Free Trade there is now no great difference of opinion, and that all agree in the general rule that we should buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market.' This expression of opinion called forth an ironical cheer from the benches of opposition. Peel knew well what the cheer was meant to convey. He knew it meant to ask him why then he did not allow the country to buy its grain in the cheapest market. He promptly added—'I know the meaning of that cheer. I do not wish to raise a discussion on the Corn Laws or the Sugar Duties, which I contend, however, are exceptions to the general rule, and I will not go into that question now.' The press of the day, whether for or against Peel, commented upon his declarations and his measures as indicating clearly that the bent of his mind was towards free trade even in grain. At all events, he had reached that mental condition when he

regarded the case of grain, like that of sugar, as a necessary exception for the time to the operation of a general rule.

It ought to have been obvious that if exceptional circumstances should arise, pulling more strongly in the direction of the League, Sir Robert Peel's own explicit declarations must bind him to recognise the necessity of applying the Free Trade principles even to corn. 'Sir Robert Peel,' says his cousin Sir Laurence Peel, in a sketch of the life and character of the great statesman, 'had been, as I have said, always a Free Trader. The questions to which he had declined to apply those principles had been viewed by him as exceptional. The Corn Law had been so treated by many able exponents of the principles of Free Trade.' Sir Robert Peel himself has left it on record that during the discussions on the Corn Law of 1842 he was more than once pressed to give a guarantee, 'so far as a minister could give it,' that the amount of protection established by that law should be permanently adhered to; 'but although I did not then contemplate the necessity for further change, I uniformly refused to fetter the discretion of the Government by any such assurances as those that were required of me.' It is evident that the condition of Sir Robert Peel's opinions was even as far back as 1842 something very different indeed from that of the ordinary county member or pledged Protectionist, and that Peel had done all he could to make this clear to his party. A minister who in 1842 refused to fetter the discretion of his Government in dealing with the protection of home-grown grain ought not on the face of things to be accused of violating his pledges and betraying his party, if four years later, under the pressure of extraordinary circumstances, he made up his mind to the abolition of such a protection. Let us test this in a manner that will be familiar to our own time. Suppose a Prime Minister is pressed by some of his own party to give the House of Commons a guarantee, 'so far as a minister could give it,' that the principle of the State Church Establishment in England shall be permanently adhered to. He declines to fetter the discretion of the Government in the future. Is it not evident that such an answer would be taken by nine out of ten of his listeners to be ominous of some change to the Established Church? If four years after the same minister were to propose to disestablish the Church, he might be denounced and he might even be execrated, but no one could fairly accuse him of having violated his pledge and betrayed his party.

The country party, however, did not understand Sir Robert Peel as their opponents and his assuredly understood him. They did not at this time believe in the possibility of any change. Free Trade was to them little more than an abstraction. They did not much care who preached it out of Parliament. They were convinced that the state of things they saw around

them when they were boys would continue to the end. They looked on Mr. Villiers and his annual motion in favour of Free Trade very much as a stout old Tory of later times might regard the annual motion for woman suffrage. Both parties in the House—that is to say, both of the parties from whom ministers were taken—alike set themselves against the introduction of any such measure. The supporters of it were, with one exception, not men of family and rank. It was agitated for a good deal out of doors, but agitation had not up to that time succeeded in making much way even with a reformed Parliament. The country party observed that some men among the two leading sets went farther in favour of the abstract principle than others; but it did not seem to them that that really affected the practical question very much. In 1842, Mr. Disraeli himself was one of those who stood up for the Free Trade principle, and insisted that it had been rather the inherited principle of the Conservatives than of the Whigs. Country gentlemen did not therefore greatly concern themselves about the practical work doing in Manchester, or the professions of abstract opinion so often made in Parliament. They did not see that the mind of their leader was avowedly in a progressive condition on the subject of Free Trade. Because they could not bring themselves to question for a moment the principle of protection for home-grown grain, they made up their minds that it was a principle as sacred with him. Against that conviction no evidence could prevail. It was with them a point of conscience and honour; it would have seemed an insult to their leader to believe even his own words if these seemed to say that it was a mere question of expediency, convenience, and time with him.

Perhaps it would have been better if Sir Robert Peel had devoted himself more directly to what Mr. Disraeli afterwards called educating his party. Perhaps, if he had made it part of his duty as a leader to prepare the minds of his followers for the fact that protection for grain having ceased to be tenable as an economic principle would possibly some day have to be given up as a practice, he might have taken his party along with him. He might have been able to show them, as the events have shown them since, that the introduction of free corn would be a blessing to the population of England in general, and would do nothing but good for the landed interest as well. The influence of Peel at that time, and indeed all through his administration up to the introduction of his Free Trade measures, was limitless, so far as his party were concerned. He could have done anything with them. Indeed, we find no evidence so clear to prove that Peel had not in 1842 made up his mind to the introduction of Free Trade, as the fact that he did not at once begin to educate his party to it. This is to be regretted.

The measure might have been passed by common accord. There is something not altogether without pathetic influence in the thought of that country party whom Peel had led so long, and who adored him so thoroughly, turning away from him and against him and mournfully seeking another leader. There is something pathetic in the thought that, rightly or wrongly, they should have believed themselves betrayed by their chief. But Peel, to begin with, was a reserved, cold, somewhat awkward man. He was not effusive; he did not pour out his emotions and reveal all his changes of opinion in bursts of confidence even to his habitual associates. He brooded over these things in his own mind; he gave such expression to them in open debate as any passing occasion seemed strictly to call for; and he assumed perhaps that the gradual changes operating in his views when thus expressed were understood by his followers. Above all, it is probable that Peel himself did not see until almost the last moment that the time had actually come when the principle of protection must give way to other and more weighty claims. In his speech announcing his intended legislation in 1846, Sir Robert Peel, with a proud frankness which was characteristic of him, denied that his altered course of action was due exclusively to the failure of the potato crop and the dread of famine in Ireland. 'I will not,' he said, 'withhold the homage which is due to the progress of reason and of truth by denying that my opinions on the subject of Protection have undergone a change. . . . I will not direct the course of the vessel by observations taken in 1842.' But it is probable that if the Irish famine had not threatened, the moment for introducing the new legislation might have been indefinitely postponed. The prospects of the Anti-Corn Law League did not look by any means bright when the session preceding the introduction of the Free Trade Legislation came to an end. The number of votes that the League could count on in Parliament did not much exceed that which the advocates of Home Rule have been able to reckon up in our day. Nothing in 1843 or in the earlier part of 1845 pointed to any immediate necessity for Sir Robert Peel's testing the progress of his own convictions by reducing them into the shape of practical action. It is therefore not hard to understand how even a far-seeing and conscientious statesman, busy with the practical work of each day, might have put off taking definite counsel with himself as to the introduction of measures for which just then there seemed no special necessity, and which could hardly be introduced without bitter controversy.

## CHAPTER XV.

### FAMINE FORCES PEEL'S HAND.

We see how the two great parties of the State stood with regard to this question of Free Trade. The Whigs were steadily gravitating towards it. Their leaders did not quite see their way to accept it as a principle of practical statesmanship, but it was evident that their acceptance of it was only a question of time, and of no long time. The leader of the Tory party was being drawn day by day more in the same direction. Both leaders, Russell and Peel, had gone so far as to admit the general principle of Free Trade. Peel had contended that grain was in England a necessary exception; Russell was not of opinion that the time had come when it could be treated otherwise than as an exception. The Free Trade party, small, indeed, in its Parliamentary force, but daily growing more and more powerful with the country, would take nothing from either leader but Free Trade *sans phrase*; and would take that from either leader without regard to partisan considerations. It is evident to anyone who knows anything of the working of our system of government by party, that this must soon have ended in one or other of the two great ruling parties forming an alliance with the Free Traders. If unforeseen events had not interposed, it is probable that conviction would first have fastened on the minds of the Whigs, and that they would have had the honour of abolishing the Corn Laws. They were out of office, and did not seem likely to get back soon to it by their own power, and the Free Trade party would have come in time to be a very desirable ally. It would be idle to pretend to doubt that the convictions of political parties are hastened on a good deal under our system by the yearning of those who are out of office to get the better of those who are in. Statesmen in England are converted as Henry of Navarre became Catholic: we do not say that they actually change their opinions for the sake of making themselves eligible for power, but a change which has been growing up imperceptibly, and which might otherwise have taken a long time to declare itself, is stimulated thus to confess itself and come out into the light. But in the case of the Anti-Corn Law agitation, an event over which political parties had no control intervened to spur the intent of the Prime Minister. Mr. Bright many years after, when pronouncing the eulogy of his dead friend Cobden, described what happened in a fine sentence: 'Famine itself, against which we had warred, joined us.' In the autumn of 1845 the potato rot began in Ireland.

The vast majority of the working population of Ireland were known to depend absolutely on the potato for subsistence. In the northern province, where the population were of Scotch extraction, the oatmeal, the brose of their ancestors, still supplied the staple of their food; but in the southern and western provinces a large proportion of the peasantry actually lived on the potato and the potato alone. In these districts whole generations grew up, lived, married, and passed away, without having ever tasted flesh meat. It was evident, then, that a failure in the potato crop would be equivalent to famine. Many of the labouring class received little or no money wages. They lived on what was called the 'cottier tenant system;' that is to say, a man worked for a landowner on condition of getting the use of a little scrap of land for himself, on which to grow potatoes to be the sole food of himself and his family. The news came in the autumn of 1845 that the long continuance of sunless wet and cold had imperilled, if not already destroyed, the food of a people.

The Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel held hasty meetings closely following each other. People began to ask whether Parliament was about to be called together, and whether the Government had resolved on a bold policy. The Anti-Corn Law League were clamouring for the opening of the ports. The Prime Minister himself was strongly in favour of such a course. He urged upon his colleagues that all restrictions upon the importation of foreign corn should be suspended either by an Order in Council, or by calling Parliament together and recommending such a measure from the throne. It is now known that in offering this advice to his colleagues Peel accompanied it with the expression of a doubt as to whether it would ever be possible to restore the restrictions that had once been suspended. Indeed, this doubt must have filled every mind. The League were openly declaring that one reason why they called for the opening of the ports was that once opened they never could be closed again. The doubt was enough for some of the colleagues of Sir Robert Peel. It seems marvellous now, how responsible statesmen could struggle for the retention of restrictions which were so unpopular and indefensible that if they were once suspended, under the pressure of no matter what exceptional necessity, they never could be reimposed. The Duke of Wellington and Lord Stanley, however, opposed the idea of opening the ports, and the proposal fell through. The Cabinet merely resolved on appointing a Commission, consisting of the heads of departments in Ireland, to take some steps to guard against a sudden outbreak of famine, and the thought of an autumnal session was abandoned. Sir Robert Peel himself has thus tersely described the manner in which his proposals were received: 'The Cabinet by a very considerable majority declined

giving its assent to the proposals which I thus made to them. They were supported by only three members of the Cabinet, the Earl of Aberdeen, Sir James Graham, and Mr. Sidney Herbert. The other members of the Cabinet, some on the ground of objection to the principle of the measures recommended, others upon the ground that there was not yet sufficient evidence of the necessity for them, withheld their sanction.'

The great cry all through Ireland was for the opening of the ports. The Mansion House Relief Committee of Dublin issued a series of resolutions declaring their conviction from the most undeniable evidence that considerably more than one third of the entire potato crop in Ireland had been already destroyed by the disease, and that the disease had not ceased its ravages, but on the contrary was daily expanding more and more. 'No reasonable conjecture can be formed,' the resolutions went on to state, 'with respect to the limit of its effects short of the destruction of the entire remaining crop;' and the document concluded with a denunciation of the Ministry for not opening the ports, or calling Parliament together before the usual time for its assembling.

Two or three days after the issue of these resolutions Lord John Russell wrote a letter from Edinburgh to his constituents, the electors of the City of London—a letter which is one of the historical documents of the reign. It announced his unqualified conversion to the principles of the Anti-Corn Law League. The failure of the potato crop was of course the immediate occasion of this letter. 'Indecision and procrastination,' Lord John Russell wrote, 'may produce a state of suffering which it is frightful to contemplate. . . . It is no longer worth while to contend for a fixed duty. In 1841 the Free Trade party would have agreed to a duty of 8*s*. per quarter on wheat, and after a lapse of years this duty might have been further reduced, and ultimately abolished. But the imposition of any duty at present, without a provision for its extinction within a short period, would but prolong a contest already sufficiently fruitful of animosity and discontent.' Lord John Russell then invited a general understanding, to put an end to a system 'which has been proved to be the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture, the source of bitter division among classes, the cause of penury, fever, mortality and crime among the people.' Then the writer added a significant remark to the effect that the Government appeared to be waiting for some excuse to give up the present Corn Laws, and urging the people to afford them all the excuse they could desire, 'by petition, by address, by remonstrance.'

Peel himself has told us in his Memoirs what was the effect which this letter produced upon his own councils. It 'could not,' he points out, 'fail to exercise a very material influence on the public mind, and on the

subject-matter of our deliberations in the Cabinet. It justified the conclusion that the Whig party was prepared to unite with the Anti-Corn Law League in demanding the total repeal of the Corn Laws.' Peel would not consent now to propose simply an opening of the ports. It would seem, he thought, a mere submission, to accept the minimum of the terms ordered by the Whig leader. That would have been well enough when he first recommended it to his Cabinet; and if it could then have been offered to the country as the spontaneous movement of a united Ministry, it would have been becoming of the emergency and of the men. But to do this now would be futile; would seem like trifling with the question. Sir Robert Peel therefore recommended to his Cabinet an early meeting of Parliament with the view of bringing forward some measure equivalent to a speedy Repeal of the Corn Laws.

The recommendation was wise. It was, indeed, indispensable. Yet it is hard to think that an impartial posterity will form a very lofty estimate of the wisdom with which the counsels of the two great English parties were guided in this momentous emergency. Neither Whigs nor Tories appear to have formed a judgment because of facts or principles, but only in deference to the political necessities of the hour. Sir Robert Peel himself denied that it was the resistless hand of famine in Ireland which had brought him to his resolve that the Corn Laws ought to be abolished. He grew into the conviction that they were bad in principle. Lord John Russell had long been growing into the same conviction. Yet the League had been left to divide with but small numbers against overwhelming majorities made up of both parties, until the very session before Peel proposed to repeal the Corn Laws. Lord Beaconsfield, indeed, indulges in something like exaggeration when he says, in his 'Life of Lord George Bentinck,' that the close of the session of 1845 found the League nearly reduced to silence. But it is not untrue that, as he says, 'the Manchester confederates seemed to be least in favour with Parliament and the country on the very eve of their triumph.' 'They lost at the same time elections and the ear of the House; and the cause of total and immediate repeal seemed in a not less hopeless position than when, under circumstances of infinite difficulty, it was first and solely upheld by the terse eloquence and vivid perception of Charles Villiers.' Lord Beaconsfield certainly ought to know what cause had and what had not the ear of the House of Commons at that time; and yet we venture to doubt, even after his assurance, whether the League and its speakers had in any way found their hold on the attention of Parliament diminishing. But the loss of elections is beyond dispute. It is a fact alluded to in the very letter from Lord John Russell which was creating so much commotion. 'It is not to be denied,'

Lord John Russell writes, 'that many elections for cities and towns in 1841, and some in 1845, appear to favour the assertion that Free Trade is not popular with the great mass of the community.' This is, from whatever cause, a very common phenomenon in our political history. A movement which began with the promise of sweeping all before it seems after a while to lose its force, and is supposed by many observers to be now only the work and the care of a few earnest and fanatical men. Suddenly it is taken up by a minister of commanding influence, and the bore or the crotchet of one Parliament is the great party controversy of a second, and the accomplished triumph of a third. In this instance it is beyond dispute that the League seemed to be somewhat losing in strength and influence just on the eve of its complete triumph. He must, indeed, be the very optimist of Parliamentary government who upholds the manner of Free Trade's final adoption as absolutely satisfactory, and as reflecting nothing but credit upon the counsels of our two great political parties. Such a well-contented personage might be fairly asked to explain why a system of protective taxation, beginning to be regarded by all thoughtful statesmen as bad in itself, should never be examined with a view to its repeal until the force of a great emergency and the rival biddings of party leaders came to render its repeal inevitable. The Corn Laws, as all the world now admits, were a cruel burden to the poor and the working class of England. They were justly described by Lord John Russell as 'the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture, the source of bitter division among classes; the cause of penury, fever, mortality and crime among the people.' All this was independent of the sudden and ephemeral calamity of the potato rot, which at the time when Lord John Russell wrote that letter did not threaten to become nearly so fatal as it afterwards proved to be. One cannot help asking, how long would the Corn Laws have been suffered thus to blight commerce and agriculture, to cause division among classes, and to produce penury, mortality and crime among the people, if the potato rot in Ireland had not rendered it necessary to do something without delay?

The potato rot, however, inspired the writing of Lord John Russell's letter; and Lord John Russell's letter inspired Sir Robert Peel with the conviction that something must be done. Most of his colleagues were inclined to go with him this time. A Cabinet Council was held on November 25, almost immediately after the publication of Lord John Russell's letter. At that council Sir Robert Peel recommended the summoning of Parliament with a view to instant measures to combat the famine in Ireland, but with a view also to some announcement of legislation intended to pave the way for the repeal of the Corn Laws. Lord Stanley still hesitated, and asked time to consider his decision. The Duke of

Wellington was unchanged in his private opinion that the Corn Laws ought to be maintained; but he declared, with a blunt simplicity, that his only object in public life was 'to support Sir Robert Peel's administration of the Government for the Queen.' 'A good Government for the country,' said the sturdy and simple old hero, 'is more important than Corn Laws or any other consideration.' One may smile at this notion of a good Government without reference to the quality of the legislation it introduces; it reminds one a little of the celebrated study of history without reference to time and place. But the Duke acted strictly up to his principles of duty, and he declared that if Sir Robert Peel considered the repeal of the Corn Laws to be, not right or necessary for the welfare of England, but requisite for the maintenance of Sir Robert Peel's position 'in Parliament and in the public view,' he should thoroughly support the proposal. Lord Stanley, however, was not to be changed in the end. He took time to consider, and seems really to have tried his best to persuade himself that he could fall in with the new position which the Premier had assumed. Meanwhile the most excited condition of public feeling prevailed throughout London and the country generally. The *Times* newspaper came out on December 4 with the announcement that the Ministry had made up its mind, and that the Royal speech at the commencement of the session would recommend an immediate consideration of the Corn Laws preparatory to their total repeal. It would be hardly possible to exaggerate the excitement caused by this startling piece of news. It was indignantly and in unqualified terms declared a falsehood by the ministerial prints. Long arguments were gone into to prove that even if the fact announced were true, it could not possibly have been known to the *Times*. In Disraeli's 'Coningsby' Mr. Rigby gives the clearest and most convincing reasons to prove first that Lord Spencer could not be dead, as report said he was; and next, that even if he were dead, the fact could not possibly be known to those who took on themselves to announce it. He is hardly silenced even by the assurance of a great duke that he is one of Lord Spencer's executors, and that Lord Spencer was certainly dead. So the announcement in the *Times* was fiercely and pedantically argued against. 'It can't be true;' 'the *Times* could not get to know of it;' 'it must be a Cabinet secret if it were true;' 'nobody outside the Cabinet could possibly know of it;' 'if anyone outside the Cabinet could get to know of it, it would not be the *Times*;' it would be this, that, or the other person or journal; and so forth. Long after it had been made certain, beyond even Mr. Rigby's power of disputation, that the announcement was true so far as the resolve of the Prime Minister was concerned, people continued to argue and controvert as to the manner in which the *Times* became possessed of

the secret. The general conclusion come to among the knowing was that the blandishments of a gifted and beautiful lady with a dash of political intrigue in her had somehow extorted the secret from a young and handsome member of the Cabinet, and that she had communicated it to the *Times*. It is not impossible that this may have been the true explanation. It was believed in by a great many persons who might have been in a position to judge of the probabilities. On the other hand, there were surely signs and tokens enough by which a shrewd politician might have guessed what was to come without any intervention of petticoat diplomacy. It seems odd now that people should then have distressed themselves so much by conjectures as to the source of the information, when once it was made certain that the information itself was substantially true. This it undoubtedly was, although it did not tell all the truth, and could not foretell. For there was an ordeal yet to be gone through before the Prime Minister could put his plans into operation. On December 4 the *Times* made the announcement. On the 6th, having been passionately contradicted, it repeated the assertion. 'We adhere to our original announcement that Parliament will meet early in January, and that a repeal of the Corn Laws will be proposed in one House by Sir R. Peel, and in the other by the Duke of Wellington.' But in the meantime the opposition in the Cabinet had proved itself unmanageable. Lord Stanley and the Duke of Buccleuch intimated to the Prime Minister that they could not be parties to any measure involving the ultimate repeal of the Corn Laws. Sir Robert Peel did not believe that he could carry out his project satisfactorily under such circumstances, and he therefore hastened to tender his resignation to the Queen. 'The other members of the Cabinet, without exception, I believe'—these are Sir Robert Peel's own words—'concurred in this opinion; and under these circumstances I considered it to be my duty to tender my resignation to her Majesty. On the 5th of December I repaired to Osborne, Isle of Wight, and humbly solicited her Majesty to relieve me from duties which I felt I could no longer discharge with advantage to her Majesty's service.' The very day after the *Times* made its famous announcement, the very day before the *Times* repeated it, the Prime Minister who was to propose the repeal of the Corn Laws went out of office.

*Quem dixere chaos!* Apparently chaos had come again. Lord John Russell was sent for from Edinburgh. His letter had, without any such purpose on his part, written him up as the man to take Sir Robert Peel's place. Lord John Russell came to London and did his best to cope with the many difficulties of the situation. His party were not very strong in the country, and they had not a majority in the House of Commons. He very naturally endeavoured to obtain from Peel a pledge that he would

support the immediate and complete repeal of the Corn Laws. Peel, writing to the Queen, 'humbly expresses his regret that he does not feel it to be consistent with his duty to enter upon the consideration of this important question in Parliament fettered by a previous engagement of the nature of that required of him.' The position of Lord John Russell was awkward. He had been forced into it because one or two of Sir Robert Peel's colleagues would not consent to adopt the policy of their chief. But the very fact of so stubborn an opposition from a man of Lord Stanley's influence showed clearly enough that the passing of Free Trade measures was not to be effected without stern resistance from the country party. The whole risk and burthen had seemingly been thrown on Lord John Russell; and now Sir Robert Peel would not even pledge himself to unconditional support of the very policy which was understood to be his own. Lord John Russell showed, even then, his characteristic courage. He resolved to form a Ministry without a Parliamentary majority. He was not however fated to try the ordeal. Lord Grey, who was a few months before Lord Howick, and who had just succeeded to the title of his father (the stately Charles Earl Grey, the pupil of Fox, and chief of the Cabinet which passed the Reform Bill and abolished slavery)—Lord Grey felt a strong objection to the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston; and these two could not get on in one Ministry as it was part of Lord John Russell's plan that they should do. Lord Grey also was strongly of opinion that a seat in the Cabinet ought to be offered to Mr. Cobden; but other great Whigs could not bring themselves to any larger sacrifice to justice and common sense than a suggestion that the office of Vice-President of the Board of Trade should be tendered to the leader of the Free Trade movement. Mr. Macaulay describes the event in a letter to a constituent in Edinburgh. 'All our plans were frustrated by Lord Grey, who objected to Lord Palmerston being Foreign Secretary. I hope that the public interests will not suffer. Sir Robert Peel must now undertake the settlement of the question. It is certain that he can settle it. It is by no means certain that we could have done so. For we shall to a man support him; and a large proportion of those who are now in office would have refused to support us.' One passage in Macaulay's letter will be read with peculiar interest. 'From the first,' he says, 'I told Lord John Russell that I stipulated for one thing only—total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws; that my objections to gradual abolition were insurmountable; but that if he declared for total and immediate repeal, I would be as to all other matters absolutely in his hands; that I would take any office or no office, just as suited him best; and that he should never be disturbed by any personal pretensions or jealousies on my part.' No one can doubt Macaulay's

sincerity and singleness of purpose. But it is surprising to note the change that the agitation of little more than two years had made in his opinions on the subject of a policy of immediate and unconditional abolition. In February 1843 he was pointing out to the electors of Edinburgh the unwisdom of refusing a compromise, and in December 1845 he is writing to Edinburgh to say that the one only thing for which he must stipulate was total and immediate repeal. The Anti-Corn Law League might well be satisfied with the propagandist work they had done. The League itself looked on very composedly during these little altercations and embarrassments of parties. They knew well enough now that let who would take power he must carry out their policy. At a meeting of the League, which was held in Covent Garden Theatre on the 17th of this memorable month, and while the negotiations were still going on, Mr. Cobden declared that he and his friends had not striven to keep one party in or another out of office. 'We have worked with but one principle and one object in view; and if we maintain that principle for but six months more, we shall attain to that state which I have so long and so anxiously desired, when the League shall be dissolved into its primitive elements by the triumph of its principles.'

Lord John Russell found it impossible to form a Ministry. He signified his failure to the Queen. Probably, having done the best he could, he was not particularly distressed to find that his efforts were ineffectual. The Queen had to send for Sir Robert Peel to Windsor and tell him that she must require him to withdraw his resignation and to remain in her service. Sir Robert of course could only comply. The Queen offered to give him some time to enter into communication with his colleagues; but Sir Robert very wisely thought that he could speak with much greater authority if he were to invite them to support him in an effort on which he was determined and which he had positively undertaken to make. He therefore returned from Windsor on the evening of December 20, 'having resumed all the functions of First Minister of the Crown.' The Duke of Buccleuch withdrew his opposition to the policy which Peel was now to carry out; but Lord Stanley remained firm. The place of the latter was taken as Secretary of State for the Colonies by Mr. Gladstone, who however, curiously enough, remained without a seat in Parliament during the eventful session that was now to come. Mr. Gladstone had sat for the borough of Newark, but that borough being under the influence of the Duke of Newcastle, who had withdrawn his support from the Ministry, he did not invite re-election, but remained without a seat in the House or Commons for some months. Sir Robert Peel then, to use his own words in a letter to the Princess de Lieven, resumed power 'with greater means of rendering

public service than I should have done had I not relinquished it.' He felt, he said, 'like a man restored to life after his funeral service had been preached.'

Parliament was summoned to meet in January. In the meantime it was easily seen how the Protectionists and the Tories of the extreme order generally would regard the proposals of Sir Robert Peel. Protectionist meetings were held in various parts of the country, and they were all but unanimous in condemning by anticipation the policy of the restored Premier. Resolutions were passed at many of these meetings expressing an equal disbelief in the Prime Minister and in the famine. The utmost indignation was expressed at the idea of there being any famine in prospect which could cause any departure from the principles which secured to the farmers a certain fixed price for their grain, or at least prevented the price from falling below what they considered a paying amount. Not less absurd than the protestations that there would be no famine were some of the remedies which were suggested for it if it should insist on coming in. The Duke of Norfolk of that time made himself particularly conspicuous by a beneficent suggestion which he offered to a distressed population. He went about recommending a curry powder of his own device as a charm against hunger.

Parliament met. The opening day was January 22, 1846. The Queen in person opened the session, and the speech from the throne said a good deal about the condition of Ireland and the failure of the potato crop. The speech contained one significant sentence. 'I have had,' her Majesty was made to say, 'great satisfaction in giving my assent to the measures which you have presented to me from time to time, calculated to extend commerce and to stimulate domestic skill and industry, by the repeal of prohibitive and the relaxation of protective duties. I recommend you to take into your early consideration whether the principle on which you have acted may not with advantage be yet more extensively applied.' Before the address in reply to the speech from the throne was moved, Sir Robert Peel gave notice of the intention of the Government on the earliest possible day to submit to the consideration of the House measures connected with the commercial and financial affairs of the country.

There are few scenes more animated and exciting than that presented by the House of Commons on some night when a great debate is expected, or when some momentous announcement is to be made. A common thrill seems to tremble all through the assembly as a breath of wind runs across the sea. The House appears for the moment to be one body pervaded by one expectation. The ministerial benches, the front benches of opposition, are occupied by the men of political renown and of historic name. The

benches everywhere else are crowded to their utmost capacity. Members who cannot get seats—on such occasion a goodly number—stand below the bar or have to dispose themselves along the side galleries. The celebrities are not confined to the Treasury benches or those of the leaders of opposition. Here and there, among the independent members and below the gangway on both sides, are seen men of influence and renown. At the opening of Parliament in 1846 this was especially to be observed. The rising fame of the Free Trade leaders made them almost like a third great party in the House of Commons. The strangers' gallery, the Speaker's gallery on such a night are crowded to excess. The eye surveys the whole House and sees no vacant place. In the very hum of conversation that runs along the benches there is a tone of profound anxiety. The minister who has to face that House and make the announcement for which all are waiting in a most feverish anxiety is a man to be envied by the ambitious. This time there was a curiosity about everything. What was the minister about to announce? When and in what fashion would he announce it? Would the Whig leaders speak before the ministerial announcement? Would the Free Traders? What voice would first hint to the expectant Commons the course which political events were destined to take? The moving of an address to the throne is always a formal piece of business. It would be hardly possible for Cicero or Burke to be very interesting when performing such a task. On the other hand, it is an excellent chance for a young beginner. He finds the House in a sort of contemptuously indulgent mood, prepared to welcome the slightest evidence of any capacity of speech above the dullest mediocrity. He can hardly say anything absurd or offensive unless he goes absolutely out of his way to make a fool of himself; and on the other hand, he can easily say his little nothings in a graceful way, and receive grateful applause accordingly from an assembly which counts on being bored, and feels doubly indebted to the speaker who is even in the slightest degree an agreeable disappointment. On this particular occasion, however, the duty of the proposer and the seconder of the address was made specially trying by the fact that they had to interfere with merely formal utterances between an eager House and an exciting announcement. A certain piquancy was lent however to the performance of the duty by the fact, which the speeches made evident beyond the possibility of mistake, that the proposer of the address knew quite well what the Government were about to do, and that the seconder knew nothing whatever.

Now the formal task is done. The address has been moved and seconded. The Speaker puts the question that the address be adopted. Now is the time for debate, if debate there is to be. On such occasions

there is always some discussion, but it is commonly as mere a piece of formality as the address itself. It is understood that the leader of opposition will say something meaning next to nothing; that two or three men will grumble vaguely at the Ministry; that the leader of the House will reply; and then the affair is all over. But on this occasion it was certain that some momentous announcement would have to be made; and the question was when it would come. Perhaps no one expected exactly what did happen. Nothing can be more unusual than for the leader of the House to open the debate on such an occasion; and Sir Robert Peel was usually somewhat of a formalist, who kept to the regular ways in all that pertained to the business of the House. No eyes of expectation were turned therefore to the ministerial bench at the moment after the formal putting of the question by the Speaker. It was rather expected that Lord John Russell, or perhaps Mr. Cobden, would rise. But a surprised murmur running through all parts of the House soon told those who could not see the Treasury bench that something unusual had happened; and in a moment the voice of the Prime Minister was heard—that marvellous voice of which Lord Beaconsfield says that it had not in his time any equal in the House 'unless we except the thrilling tones of O'Connell'—and it was known that the great explanation was coming at once.

The explanation even now, however, was somewhat deferred. The Prime Minister showed a deliberate intention, it might have been thought, not to come to the point at once. He went into long and laboured explanations of the manner in which his mind had been brought into a change on the subject of Free Trade and Protection; and he gave exhaustive calculations to show that the reduction of duty was constantly followed by expansion of the revenue, and even a maintenance of high prices. The duties on glass, the duties on flax, the prices of salt pork and domestic lard, the contract price of salt beef for the navy—these and many other such topics were discussed at great length, and with elaborate fulness of detail in the hearing of an eager House, anxious only for that night to know whether or not the minister meant to introduce the principle of Free Trade. Peel, however, made it clear enough that he had become a complete convert to the doctrines of the Manchester school, and that in his opinion the time had come when that protection which he had taken office to maintain must for ever be abandoned. One sentence at the close of his speech was made the occasion of much laboured criticism and some severe accusation. It was that in which Peel declared that he found it 'no easy task to ensure the harmonious and united action of an ancient monarchy, a proud aristocracy, and a reformed House of Commons.'

The explanation was over. The House of Commons were left rather

to infer than to understand what the Government proposed to do. Lord John Russell entered into some personal explanations relating to his endeavour to form a Ministry, and the causes of its failure. These have not much interest for a later time. It might have seemed that the work of the night was done. It was evident that the ministerial policy could not be discussed then; for, in fact, it had not been announced. The House knew that the Prime Minister was a convert to the principles of Free Trade; but that was all that anyone could be said to know except those who were in the secrets of the Cabinet. There appeared therefore nothing for it but to wait until the time should come for the formal announcement and the full discussion of Government measures. Suddenly, however, a new and striking figure intervened in the languishing debate, and filled the House of Commons with a fresh life. There is not often to be found in our Parliamentary history an example like this of a sudden turn given to a whole career by a timely speech. The member who rose to comment on the explanation of Sir Robert Peel had been for many years in the House of Commons. This was his tenth session. He had spoken often in each session. He had made many bold attempts to win a name in Parliament, and hitherto his political career had been simply a failure. From the hour when he spoke this speech, it was one long, unbroken, brilliant success.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### MR. DISRAELI.

The speaker who rose into such sudden prominence and something like the position of a party leader was one of the most remarkable men the politics of the reign have produced. Perhaps, if the word remarkable were to be used in its most strict sense, and without particular reference to praise, it would be just to describe him as emphatically the most remarkable man that the political controversies of the present reign have called into power. Mr. Disraeli entered the House of Commons as Conservative member for Maidstone in 1837. He was then about thirty-two years of age. He had previously made repeated and unsuccessful attempts to get a seat in Parliament. He began his political career as an advanced Liberal, and had come out under the auspices of Daniel O'Connell and Joseph Hume. He had described himself as one who desired to fight the battle of the people, and who was supported by neither of the aristocratic parties. He failed again and again, and apparently he began to think that it would be a wiser thing to look for the support of one or other of the aristocratic parties. He had

before this given indications of remarkable literary talent, if indeed it might not be called genius. His novel, 'Vivian Grey,' published when he was in his twenty-third year, was suffused with extravagance, affectation, and mere animal spirits; but it was full of the evidences of a fresh and brilliant ability. The son of a distinguished literary man, Mr. Disraeli had probably at that time only a young literary man's notions of politics. It is not necessary to charge him with deliberate inconsistency because from having been a Radical of the most advanced views he became by an easy leap a romantic Tory. It is not likely that at the beginning of his career he had any very clear ideas in connection with the words Tory or Radical. He wrote a letter to Mr. W. J. Fox, already described as an eminent Unitarian minister and rising politician, in which he declared that his *forte* was sedition. Most clever young men who are not born to fortune, and who feel drawn into political life, fancy too that their *forte* is sedition. When young Disraeli found that sedition and even advanced Radicalism did not do much to get him into Parliament, he probably began to ask himself whether his Liberal convictions were so deeply rooted as to call for the sacrifice of a career. He thought the question over, and doubtless found himself crystallising fast into an advocate of the established order of things. In a purely personal light, this was a fortunate conclusion for the ambitious young politician. He could not then have anticipated the extraordinary change which was to be wrought in the destiny and the composition of the Tory party by the eloquence, the arguments, and the influence of two men who at that time were almost absolutely unknown. Mr. Cobden stood for the first time as a candidate for a seat in Parliament in the year that saw Mr. Disraeli elected for the first time, and Mr. Cobden was unsuccessful. Cobden had to wait four years before he found his way into the House of Commons; Bright did not become a member of Parliament until some two years later still. It was, however, the Anti-Corn Law agitation which, by conquering Peel and making him its advocate, brought about the memorable split in the Conservative party, and carried away from the cause of the country squires nearly all the men of talent who had hitherto been with them. A new or middle party of so-called Peelites was formed. Graham, Gladstone, Sidney Herbert, Cardwell, and other men of equal mark or promise, joined it; and the country party was left to seek for leadership in the earnest spirit and very moderate talents of Lord George Bentinck. Mr. Disraeli then found his chance. His genius was such that it must have made a way for him anywhere and in spite of any competition; but it is not too much to say that his career of political advancement might have been very different if, in place of finding himself the only man of first-class ability in the party to which he had attached himself, he had

been a member of a party which had Palmerston and Russell and Gladstone and Graham for its captains, and Cobden and Bright for its habitual supporters.

This, however, could not have been in Mr. Disraeli's thoughts when he changed from Radicalism to Conservatism. No trace of the progress of conversion can be found in his speeches or his writings. It is not unreasonable to infer that he took up Radicalism at the beginning because it looked the most picturesque and romantic thing to do, and that only as he found it fail to answer his personal object did it occur to him that he had after all more affinity with the cause of the country gentlemen. The reputation he had made for himself before his going into Parliament was of a nature rather calculated to retard than to advance a political career. He was looked upon almost universally as an eccentric and audacious adventurer, who was kept from being dangerous by the affectations and absurdities of his conduct. He dressed in the extremest style of preposterous foppery; he talked a blending of cynicism and sentiment; he had made the most reckless statements; his boasting was almost outrageous; his rhetoric of abuse was, even in that free-spoken time, astonishingly vigorous and unrestrained. Even his literary efforts did not then receive anything like the appreciation they have obtained since. At that time they were regarded rather as audacious whimsicalities, the fantastic freaks of a clever youth, than as genuine works of a certain kind of art. Even when he did get into the House of Commons, his first experience there was little calculated to give him much hope of success. Reading over this first speech now, it seems hard to understand why it should have excited so much laughter and derision; why it should have called forth nothing but laughter and derision. It is a clever speech, full of point and odd conceits; very like in style and structure many of the speeches which in later years won for the same orator the applause of the House of Commons. But Mr. Disraeli's reputation had preceded him into the House. Up to this time his life had been, says an unfriendly but not an unjust critic, 'an almost uninterrupted career of follies and defeats.' The House was probably in a humour to find the speech ridiculous because the general impression was that the man himself was ridiculous. Mr. Disraeli's appearance, too, no doubt, contributed something to the contemptuous opinion which was formed of him on his first attempt to address the assembly which he afterwards came to rule. He is described by an observer as having been attired 'in a bottle-green frock coat and a waistcoat of white, of the Dick Swiveller pattern, the front of which exhibited a network of glittering chains; large fancy-pattern pantaloons, and a black tie, above which no shirt-collar was visible, completed the outward man. A countenance lividly pale, set out by a

pair of intensely black eyes, and a broad but not very high forehead, overhung by clustering ringlets of coal-black hair, which, combed away from the right temple, fell in bunches of well-oiled small ringlets over his left cheek.' His manner was intensely theatric; his gestures were wild and extravagant. In all this there is not much, however, to surprise those who knew Mr. Disraeli in his greater days. His style was always extravagant; his rhetoric constantly degenerated into vulgarity; his whole manner was that of the typical foreigner whom English people regard as the illustration of all that is vehement and unquiet. But whatever the cause, it is certain that on the occasion of his first attempt Mr. Disraeli made not merely a failure, but even a ludicrous failure. One who heard the debate thus describes the manner in which, baffled by the persistent laughter and other interruptions of the noisy House, the orator withdrew from the discussion, defeated but not discouraged. 'At last, losing his temper, which until now he had preserved in a wonderful manner, he paused in the midst of a sentence, and looking the Liberals indignantly in the face, raised his hands, and opening his mouth as widely as its dimensions would admit, said in a remarkably loud and almost terrific tone, "I have begun several times, many things and I have often succeeded at last; ay, sir, and though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me."' This final prediction is so like what a manufacturer of biography would make up for a hero, and is so like what was actually said in one or two other remarkable instances, that a reader might be excused for doubting its authenticity in this case. But nothing can be more certain than the fact that Mr. Disraeli did bring to a close his maiden speech in the House of Commons with this bold prediction. The words are to be found in the reports published next morning in all the daily papers of the metropolis.

It was thus that Mr. Disraeli began his career as a Parliamentary orator. It is a curious fact that on that occasion almost the only one of his hearers who seems to have admired the speech was Sir Robert Peel. It is by his philippic against Peel that Disraeli is now about to convince the House of Commons that the man they laughed at before is a great Parliamentary orator.

Disraeli was not in the least discouraged by his first failure. A few days after it he spoke again, and he spoke three or four times more during his first session. But he had learned some wisdom by rough experience, and he did not make his oratorical flights so long or so ambitious as that first attempt. Then he seemed after a while, as he grew more familiar with the House, to go in for being paradoxical; for making himself always conspicuous; for taking up positions and expounding political creeds which other men would have avoided. It is very difficult to get any clear

idea of what his opinions were about this period of his career, if he had any political opinions at all. Our impression is that he really had no opinions at that time; that he was only in quest of opinions. He spoke on subjects of which it was evident that he knew nothing, and sometimes he managed, by the sheer force of a strong intelligence, to discern the absurdity of economic sophistries which had baffled men of far greater experience, and which indeed, to judge from his personal declarations and political conduct afterwards, he allowed before long to baffle and bewilder himself. More often, however, he talked with a grandiose and oracular vagueness which seemed to imply that he alone of all men saw into the very heart of the question, but that he, of all men, must not yet reveal what he saw. At his best of times Mr. Disraeli was an example of that class of being whom Macaulay declares to be so rare that Lord Chatham appears to him almost a solitary illustration of it—'a great man of real genius and of a brave, lofty and commanding spirit, without simplicity of character.' What Macaulay goes on to say of Chatham will bear quotation too. 'He was an actor in the closet, an actor at council, an actor in Parliament; and even in private society he could not lay aside his theatrical tones and attitudes.' Mr. Disraeli was at one period of his career so affected that he positively affected affectation. Yet he was a man of undoubted genius; he had a spirit that never quailed under stress of any circumstances, however disheartening; he commanded as scarcely any statesman since Chatham himself has been able to do; and it would be unjust and absurd to deny to a man gifted with qualities like these the possession of a lofty nature.

For some time Mr. Disraeli then seemed resolved to make himself remarkable—to be talked about. He succeeded admirably. He was talked about. All the political and satirical journals of the day had a great deal to say about him. He is not spoken of in terms of praise as a rule. Neither has he much praise to shower about him. Anyone who looks back to the political controversies of that time will be astounded at the language which Mr. Disraeli addresses to his opponents of the press, and which his opponents address to him. In some cases it is no exaggeration to say that a squabble between two Billingsgate fishwomen in our day would have good chance of ending without the use of words and phrases so coarse as those which then passed between this brilliant literary man and some of his assailants. We have all read the history of the controversy between him and O'Connell, and the savage ferocity of the language with which O'Connell denounced him as 'a miscreant,' as 'a wretch,' 'a liar,' 'whose life is a living lie;' and finally as 'the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died impenitent on the Cross.' Mr

Disraeli begins his reply by describing himself as one of those who 'will not be insulted even by a Yahoo without chastising it;' and afterwards, in a letter to one of Mr. O'Connell's sons, declares his desire to express 'the utter scorn in which I hold his [Mr. O'Connell's] character, and the disgust with which his conduct inspires me;' and informs the son that 'I shall take every opportunity of holding your father's name up to public contempt, and I fervently pray that you or some one of your blood may attempt to avenge the inextinguishable hatred with which I shall pursue his existence.' In reading of a controversy like this between two public men, we seem to be transported back to an age having absolutely nothing in common with our own. It appears almost impossible to believe that men still active in political life were active in political life then. Yet this is not the most astonishing specimen of the sort of controversy in which Mr. Disraeli became engaged in his younger days. Nothing perhaps that the political literature of the time preserves could exceed the ferocity of his controversial duel with O'Connell; but there are many samples of the rhetoric of abuse to be found in the journals of the time which would far less bear exposure to the gaze of the fastidious public of our day. The duelling system survived then and for long after, and Mr. Disraeli always professed himself ready to sustain with his pistol anything that his lips might have given utterance to, even in the reckless heat of controversy. The social temper which in our time insists that the first duty of a gentleman is to apologise for an unjust or offensive expression used in debate was unknown then. Perhaps it could hardly exist to any great extent in the company of the duelling system. When a man's withdrawal of an offensive expression might be imputed to a want of physical courage, the courtesy which impels a gentleman to atone for a wrong is not likely to triumph very often over the fear of being accounted a coward. If anyone doubts the superiority of manners as well as of morals which comes of our milder ways, he has only to read a few specimens of the controversies of Mr. Disraeli's earlier days, when men who aspired to be considered great political leaders thought it not unbecoming to call names like a costermonger, and to swagger like Bobadil or the Copper Captain.

Mr. Disraeli kept himself well up to the level of his time in the calling of names and the swaggering. But he was making himself remarkable in political controversy as well. In the House of Commons he began to be regarded as a dangerous adversary in debate. He was wonderfully ready with retort and sarcasm. But during all the earlier part of his career he was thought of only as a free lance. He had praised Peel when Peel said something that suited him, or when to praise Peel seemed likely to wound someone else. But it was during the debates on the abolition of the Corn

Laws that he first rose to the fame of a great debater and a powerful Parliamentary orator. We use the words powerful Parliamentary orator with the purpose of conveying a special qualification. He is a great Parliamentary orator who can employ the kind of eloquence and argument which tell most readily on Parliament. But it must not be supposed that the great Parliamentary orator is necessarily a great orator in the wider sense. Some of the men who made the greatest successes as Parliamentary orators have failed to win any genuine reputations as orators of the broader and higher school. The fame of Charles Townshend's 'champagne speech' has vanished, evanescent almost as the bubbles from which it derived its inspiration and its name. No one now reads many even of the fragments preserved for us of those speeches of Sheridan which those who heard them declared to have surpassed all ancient and modern eloquence. The House of Commons often found Burke dull, and the speeches of Burke have passed into English literature secure of a perpetual place there. Mr. Disraeli never succeeded in being more than a Parliamentary orator, and probably would not have cared to be anything more. But even at this comparatively early date, and while he had still the reputation of being a whimsical, self-confident and feather-headed adventurer, he soon won for himself the name of one who could hold his own in retort and in sarcasm against any antagonist. The days of the more elaborate oratory were going by, and the time was coming when the pungent epigram, the sparkling paradox, the rattling attack, the vivid repartee, would count for the most attractive part of eloquence with the House of Commons.

Mr. Disraeli was exactly the man to succeed under the new conditions of Parliamentary eloquence. Hitherto he had wanted a cause to inspire and justify audacity, and on which to employ with effect his remarkable resources of sarcasm and rhetoric. Hitherto he had addressed an audience out of sympathy with him for the most part. Now he was about to become the spokesman of a large body of men who, chafing and almost choking with wrath, were not capable of speaking effectively for themselves. Mr. Disraeli did therefore the very wisest thing he could do when he launched at once into a savage personal attack upon Sir Robert Peel. The speech abounds in passages of audaciously powerful sarcasm. 'I am not one of the converts,' Mr. Disraeli said. 'I am perhaps a member of a fallen party. To the opinions which I have expressed in this House in favour of Protection I still adhere. They sent me to this House, and if I had relinquished them I should have relinquished my seat also.' That was the key-note of the speech. He denounced Sir Robert Peel, not for having changed his opinions, but for having retained a position which

enabled him to betray his party. He compared Peel to the Lord High Admiral of the Turkish fleet, who at a great warlike crisis, when he was placed at the head of the finest armament that ever left the Dardanelles since the days of Solyman the Great, steered at once for the enemy's port, and when arraigned as a traitor, said that he really saw no use in prolonging a hopeless struggle, and that he had accepted the command of the fleet only to put the Sultan out of pain by bringing the struggle to a close at once. 'Well do we remember, on this side of the House—not perhaps without a blush—the efforts we made to raise him to the bench where he now sits. Who does not remember the sacred cause of Protection for which sovereigns were thwarted, Parliament dissolved, and a nation taken in?' 'I belong to a party which can triumph no more, for we have nothing left on our side except the constituencies which we have not betrayed.' He denounced Peel as 'a man who never originates an idea; a watcher of the atmosphere; a man who takes his observations, and when he finds the wind in a particular quarter trims his sails to suit it;' and he declared that 'such a man may be a powerful minister, but he is no more a great statesman than the man who gets up behind a carriage is a great whip.'

'The opportune,' says Mr. Disraeli himself in his 'Lord George Bentinck,' 'in a popular assembly has sometimes more success than the weightiest efforts of research and reason.' He is alluding to this very speech, of which he says, with perhaps a superfluous modesty, that 'it was the long constrained passion of the House that now found a vent far more than the sallies of the speaker that changed the frigid silence of this senate into excitement and tumult.' The speech was indeed opportune. But it was opportune in a far larger sense than as a timely philippic rattling up an exhausted and disappointed House. That moment when Disraeli rose was the very turning point of the fortunes of his party. There was genius, there was positive statesmanship, in seizing so boldly and so adroitly on the moment. It would have been a great thing gained for Peel if he could have got through that first night without any alarm note of opposition from his own side. The habits of Parliamentary discipline are very clinging. They are hard to tear away. Every impulse of association and training protests against the very effort to rend them asunder. A once powerful minister exercises a control over his long obedient followers somewhat like that of the heart of the Bruce in the fine old Scottish story. Those who once followed will still obey the name and the symbol even when the actual power to lead is gone for ever. If one other night's habitude had been added to the long discipline that bound his party to Peel; if they had allowed themselves to listen to that

declaration of the session's first night without murmur, perhaps they might never have rebelled. Mr. Disraeli drew together into one focus all the rays of their gathering anger against Peel, and made them light into a flame. He showed the genius of the born leader, by stepping forth at the critical moment and giving the word of command.

From that hour Mr. Disraeli was the real leader of the Tory squires; from that moment his voice gave the word of command to the Tory party. There was peculiar courage too in the part he took. He must have known that he was open to one retort from Peel that might have crushed a less confident man. It was well known that when Peel was coming into power Disraeli expected to be offered a place of some kind in the Ministry, and would have accepted it. Mr. Disraeli afterwards explained, when Peel made allusion to the fact, that he had never put himself directly forward as a candidate for office; but there had undoubtedly been some negotiation going forward which was conducted on Mr. Disraeli's side by someone who supposed he was doing what Disraeli would like to have done; and Peel had not taken any hint, and would not in any way avail himself of Disraeli's services. Disraeli must have known that when he attacked Peel the latter would hardly fail to make use of this obvious retort; but he felt little daunted on that score. He could have made a fair enough defence of his consistency in any case, but he knew very well that what the indignant Tories wanted just then was not a man who had been uniformly consistent, but one who could attack Sir Robert Peel without scruple and with effect. Disraeli made his own career by the course he took on that memorable night, and he also made a new career for the Tory party.

Now that he had proved himself so brilliant a *spadassin* in this debate, men began to remember that he had dealt trenchant blows before. Many of his sentences attacking Peel, which have passed into familiar quotation almost like proverbs, were spoken in 1845. He had accused the great minister of having borrowed his tactics from the Whigs. 'The right honourable gentleman caught the Whigs bathing and he walked away with their clothes. He has left them in the full enjoyment of their liberal position, and he is himself a strict conservative of their garments.' 'I look on the right honourable gentleman as a man who has tamed the shrew of Liberalism by her own tactics. He is the political Petruchio who has outbid you all.' 'If the right honourable gentleman would only stick to quotation instead of having recourse to obloquy, he may rely upon it he would find it a safer weapon. It is one he always wields with the hand of a master, and when he does appeal to any authority in prose or verse, he is sure to be successful, partly because he seldom quotes a pas-

sage that has not already received the meed of Parliamentary approbation.' We can all readily understand how such a hit as the last would tell in the case of an orator like Peel, who had the old-fashioned way of introducing long quotations from approved classic authors into his speeches, and who not unfrequently introduced citations which were received with all the better welcome by the House because of the familiarity of their language. More fierce and cutting was the reference to Canning, with whom Peel had quarrelled, and the implied contrast of Canning with Peel. Sir Robert had cited against Disraeli Canning's famous lines praying to be saved from a 'candid friend.' Disraeli seized the opportunity thus given. 'The name of Canning is one,' he said, 'never to be mentioned, I am sure, in this House without emotion. We all admire his genius; we all, or at least most of us, deplore his untimely end; and we all sympathise with him in his severe struggle with supreme prejudice and sublime mediocrity, with inveterate foes and with candid friends.' The phrase 'sublime mediocrity' had a marvellous effect. As a hostile description of Peel's character, it had enough of seeming truth about it to tell most effectively alike on friends and enemies of the great leader. A friend, or even an impartial enemy, would not indeed admit that it accurately described Peel's intellect and position; but as a stroke of personal satire it touched nearly enough the characteristics of its object to impress itself at once as a master-hit on the minds of all who caught its instant purpose. The words remained in use long after the controversy and its occasion had passed away; and it was allowed that an unfriendly and bitter critic could hardly have found a phrase more suited to its ungenial purpose or more likely to connect itself at once in the public mind with the name of him who was its object. Mr. Disraeli did not in fact greatly admire Canning. He has left a very disparaging criticism of Canning as an orator in one of his novels. On the other hand, he has shown in his 'Life of Lord George Bentinck' that he could do full justice to some of the greatest qualities of Sir Robert Peel. But at the moment of his attacking Peel and crying up Canning he was only concerned to disparage the one, and it was on this account that he eulogised the other. The famous sentence too in which he declared that a Conservative Government was an 'organised hypocrisy' was spoken during the debates of the Session of 1845, before the explanation of the minister on the subject of Free Trade. All these brilliant things men now began to recall. Looking back from this distance of time, we can see well enough that Mr. Disraeli had displayed his peculiar genius long before the House of Commons took the pains to recognise it. From the night of the opening of the session of 1846 it was never questioned. Thenceforward he was really the mouthpiece and the sense-carrier

of his party. For some time to come indeed his nominal post might have seemed to be only that of its bravo. The country gentlemen who cheered to the echo his fierce attacks on Peel during the debates of the session of 1846, had probably not the slightest suspicion that the daring rhetorician who was so savagely revenging them on their now hated leader was a man of as cool a judgment, as long a head, and as complete a capacity for the control of any party as any politician who for generations had appeared in the House of Commons.

One immediate effect of the turn thus given by Disraeli's timely intervention in the debate was the formation of a Protection party in the House of Commons. The leadership of this perilous adventure was entrusted to Lord George Bentinck, a sporting nobleman of energetic character, great tenacity of purpose and conviction, and a not inconsiderable aptitude for politics which had hitherto had no opportunity for either exercising or displaying itself. Lord George Bentinck had sat in eight Parliaments without taking part in any great debate. When he was suddenly drawn into the leadership of the Protection party in the House of Commons, he gave himself up to it entirely. He had at first only joined the party as one of its organisers; but he showed himself in many respects well fitted for the leadership, and the choice of leaders was in any case very limited. When once he had accepted the position, he was unwearying in his attention to its duties; and indeed up to the moment of his sudden and premature death he never allowed himself any relaxation from the cares it imposed on him. Mr. Disraeli, in his 'Life of Lord George Bentinck,' has indeed overrated, with the pardonable extravagance of friendship, the intellectual gifts of his leader. Bentinck's abilities were hardly even of the second class; and the amount of knowledge which he brought to bear on the questions he discussed with so much earnestness and energy was often and of necessity little better than mere cram. But in Parliament the essential qualities of a leader are not great powers of intellect. A man of cool head, good temper, firm will, and capacity for appreciating the serviceable qualities of other men, may, always provided that he has high birth and great social influence, make a very successful leader, even though he be wanting altogether in the higher attributes of eloquence and statesmanship. It may be doubted whether, on the whole, great eloquence and genius are necessary at all to the leader of a party in Parliament in times not specially troublous. Bentinck had patience, energy, good humour, and considerable appreciation of the characters of men. If he had a bad voice, was a poor speaker, talked absolute nonsense about protective duties and sugar and guano, and made up absurd calculations to prove impossibilities and paradoxes, he at least always spoke in full faith and was only

the more necessary to his party because he could honestly continue to believe in the old doctrines, no matter what political economy and hard facts might say to the contrary.

The secession was, therefore, in full course of organisation. On January 27 Sir Robert Peel came forward to explain his financial policy. It is almost superfluous to say that the most intense anxiety prevailed all over the country, and that the House was crowded. An incident of the night, which then created a profound sensation, would not be worth noticing now but for the evidence it gives of the bitterness with which the Protection party were filled, and of the curiously bad taste of which gentlemen of position and education can be guilty under the inspiration of a blind fanaticism. There is something ludicrous in the pompous tone as of righteous indignation deliberately repressed, with which Mr. Disraeli, in his Life of Bentinck, announces the event. The proceedings in the House of Commons, he says, 'were ushered in by a startling occurrence.' What was this portentous preliminary? 'His Royal Highness the Prince Consort, attended by the Master of the Horse, appeared and took his seat in the body of the House to listen to the statement of the First Minister.' In other words, there was to be a statement of great importance and a debate of profound interest, and the husband of the Queen was anxious to be a listener. The Prince Consort did not understand that because he had married the Queen he was therefore to be precluded from hearing a discussion in the House of Commons. The poorest man and the greatest man in the land were alike free to occupy a seat in one of the galleries of the House, and it is not to be wondered at if the Prince Consort fancied that he too might listen to a debate without unhinging the British Constitution. Lord George Bentinck and the Protectionists were aflame with indignation. They saw in the quiet presence of the intelligent gentleman who came to listen to the discussion an attempt to overawe the Commons and compel them to bend to the will of the Crown. It is not easy to read without a feeling of shame the absurd and unseemly comments which were made upon this harmless incident. The Queen herself has given an explanation of the Prince's visit which is straightforward and dignified. 'The Prince merely went, as the Prince of Wales and the Queen's other sons do, for once, to hear a fine debate, which is so useful to all princes.' 'But this,' the Queen adds, 'he naturally felt unable to do again.'

The Prime Minister announced his policy. His object was to abandon the sliding scale altogether; but for the present he intended to impose a duty of ten shillings a quarter on corn when the price of it was under forty-eight shillings a quarter; to reduce that duty by one shilling for every shilling of rise in price until it reached fifty-three shillings a

quarter, when the duty should fall to four shillings. This arrangement was, however, only to hold good for three years, at the end of which time protective duties on grain were to be wholly abandoned. Peel explained that he intended gradually to apply the principle of Free Trade to manufactures and every description of produce, bearing in mind the necessity of providing for the expenditure of the country, and of smoothing away some of the difficulties which a sudden withdrawal of protection might cause. The differential duties on sugar, which were professedly intended to protect the growers of free sugars against the competition of those who cultivated sugar by the use of slave labour, were to be diminished, but not abolished. The duties on the importation of foreign cattle were to be at once removed. In order to compensate the agricultural interests for the gradual withdrawal of protective duties, there were to be some readjustments of local burdens. We need not dwell much on this part of the explanation. We are familiar in late years with the ingenious manner in which the principle of the readjustment of local burdens is worked in the hope of conciliating the agricultural interests. These readjustments are not usually received with any great gratitude or attended by any particular success. In this instance Sir Robert Peel could hardly have laid much serious stress on them. If the landowners and farmers had really any just ground of complaint in the abolition of protection, the salve which was applied to their wound would scarcely have caused them to forget its pains. The important part of the explanation, so far as history is concerned, consisted in the fact that Peel proclaimed himself an absolute convert to the Free Trade principle, and that the introduction of the principle into all departments of our commercial legislation was, according to his intention, to be a mere question of time and convenience. The struggle was to be between Protection and Free Trade.

Not that the proposals of the Ministry wholly satisfied the professed Free Traders. These latter would have enforced, if they could, an immediate application of the principle without the interval of three years, and the devices and shifts which were to be put in operation during that middle time. But of course, although they pressed their protest in the form of an amendment, they had no idea of not taking what they could get when the amendment failed to secure the approval of the majority. The Protectionist amendment amounted to a distinct proposal that the policy of the Government be absolutely rejected by the House. The debate lasted for twelve nights, and at the end the Protectionists had 240 votes against 337 given on behalf of the policy of the Government. The majority of 97 was not quite so large as the Government had anticipated; and the result was to encourage the Protectionists in their plans of opposition. The

opportunities of obstruction were many. The majority just mentioned was merely in favour of going into committee of the whole house to consider the existing Customs and Corn Acts; but every single financial scheme which the minister had to propose must be introduced, debated and carried, if it was to be carried, as a separate bill. We shall not ask our readers to follow us into the details of these long discussions. They were not important; they were often not dignified. They more frequently concerned themselves about the conduct and personal consistency of the minister than about the merits of his policy. The arguments in favour of protection, which doubtless seemed effective to the country gentlemen then, seem like the prattle of children now. There were, indeed, some exciting passages in the debates. For these the House was mainly indebted to the rhetoric of Mr. Disraeli. That indefatigable and somewhat reckless champion occupied himself with incessant attacks on the Prime Minister. He described Peel as 'a trader on other people's intelligence; a political burglar of other men's ideas.' 'The occupants of the Treasury bench,' he said, were 'political pedlars, who had bought their party in the cheapest market and sold it in the dearest.' This was strong language. But it was after all more justifiable than the attempt Mr. Disraeli made to revive an old and bitter controversy between Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Cobden, which for the sake of the former had better have been forgotten. Three years before, Mr. Edward Drummond, private secretary of Sir Robert Peel, was shot by an assassin. There could be no doubt that the victim had been mistaken for the Prime Minister himself. The assassin turned out to be a lunatic, and as such was found not guilty of the murder and was consigned to a lunatic asylum. The event naturally had a profound effect on Sir Robert Peel, and during one of the debates on Free Trade Mr. Cobden happening to say that he would hold the Prime Minister responsible for the condition of the country, Peel, in an extraordinary burst of excitement, interpreted the words as a threat to expose him to the attack of an assassin. Nothing could be more painfully absurd; and nothing could better show the unreasoning and discreditable hatred of the Tories at that time for anyone who opposed the policy of Peel than the fact that they actually cheered their leader again and again when he made this passionate and half-frenzied charge on one of the purest and noblest men who ever sat in the English Parliament. Peel soon recovered his senses. He saw the error of which he had been guilty and regretted it; and it ought to have been consigned to forgetfulness; but Mr. Disraeli, in repelling a charge made against him of indulging in unjustifiable personalities, revived the whole story and reminded the House of Commons that the Prime Minister had charged the leader of the Free Trade League with inciting assassins to

murder him. This unjustifiable attempt to rekindle an old quarrel had, however, no other effect than to draw from Sir Robert Peel a renewed expression of apology for the charge he had made against Mr. Cobden, 'in the course of a heated debate, when I put an erroneous construction on some expressions used by the hon. member for Stockport.' Mr. Cobden declared that the explanation made by Peel was entirely satisfactory, and expressed his hope that no one on either side of the House would attempt to revive the subject or make further allusion to it.

The Government prevailed. It would be superfluous to go into any details as to the progress of the Corn Bill. Enough to say that the third reading of the bill passed the House of Commons on May 15, by a majority of 98 votes. The bill was at once sent up to the House of Lords, and, by means chiefly of the earnest advice of the Duke of Wellington, was carried through that House without much serious opposition. But June 25, the day when the bill was read for a third time in the House of Lords, was a memorable day in the Parliamentary annals of England. It saw the fall of the Ministry who had carried to success the greatest piece of legislation that had been introduced since Lord Grey's Reform Bill.

A Coercion Bill for Ireland was the measure which brought this catastrophe on the Government of Sir Robert Peel. While the Corn Bill was yet passing through the House of Commons the Government felt called upon, in consequence of the condition of crime and outrage in Ireland, to introduce a Coercion Bill. Lord George Bentinck at first gave the measure his support; but during the Whitsuntide recess he changed his views. He now declared that he had only supported the bill on the assurance of the Government that it was absolutely necessary for the safety of life in Ireland, and that as the Government had not pressed it on in advance of every other measure—especially no doubt of the Corn Bill—he could not believe that it was really a matter of imminent necessity; and that furthermore he had no longer any confidence in the Government and could not trust them with extraordinary powers. In truth the bill was placing the Government in a serious difficulty. All the Irish followers of O'Connell would of course oppose the coercion measure. The Whigs when out of office have usually made it a rule to oppose coercion bills if they do not come accompanied with some promises of legislative reform and concession. The English Radical members, Mr. Cobden and his followers, were almost sure to oppose it. Under these circumstances, it seemed probable enough that if the Protectionists joined with the other opponents of the Coercion Bill the Government must be defeated. The temptation was too great. As Mr. Disraeli himself candidly says of his party, 'vengeance had succeeded in most breasts to the more sanguine sentiment. The field was lost, but at any rate there should be

retribution for those who had betrayed it.' The question with many of the indignant Protectionists was, as Mr. Disraeli himself puts it, 'How was Sir Robert Peel to be turned out?' It soon became evident that he could be turned out by those who detested him and longed for vengeance voting against him on the Coercion Bill. This was done. The fiercer Protectionists voted with the Free Traders, the Whigs, and the Irish Catholic and Liberal members; and after a debate of much bitterness and passion, the division on the second reading of the Coercion Bill took place on Thursday, June 25, and the Ministry were left in a minority of 73. Two hundred and nineteen votes only were given for the second reading of the bill, and 292 against it. Some eighty of the Protectionists followed Lord George Bentinck into the lobby to vote against the bill, and their votes settled the question. Mr. Disraeli has given a somewhat pompous description of the scene 'as the Protectionists passed in defile before the minister to the hostile lobby.' 'Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas immolat,' cries the hero of the Æneid, as he plunges his sword into the heart of his rival. 'Protection kills you; not your Coercion Bill,' the irreconcilable Protectionists might have said as they trooped past the minister. Chance had put within their grasp the means of vengeance, and they had seized it and made successful use of it. The Peel Ministry had fallen in its very hour of triumph.

Three days after Sir Robert Peel announced his resignation of office. His speech 'was considered one of glorification and pique,' says Mr. Disraeli. It does not so impress most readers. It appears to have been full of dignity and of emotion, not usual with Peel, but not surely under the circumstances incompatible with dignity. It contained that often-quoted tribute to the services of a former opponent, in which Peel declared that 'the name which ought to be, and which will be, associated with the success of these measures is the name of the man who, acting, I believe, from pure and disinterested motives, has advocated their cause with untiring energy and with appeals to reason enforced by an eloquence the more to be admired because it is unaffected and unadorned—the name of Richard Cobden.' An added effect was given to this well-deserved panegyric by the little irregularity which the Prime Minister committed when he mentioned in debate a member by name. The closing sentence of the speech was eloquent and touching. Many would censure him, Peel said; his name would perhaps be execrated by the monopolist who would maintain protection for his own individual benefit; 'but it may be that I shall leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of good will in those places which are the abode of men whose lot it is to labour and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow—a name remembered with expressions of good will when they shall recreate their exhausted strength with

abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened with a sense of injustice.'

The great minister fell. So great a success followed by so sudden and complete a fall is hardly recorded in the Parliamentary history of our modern times. Peel had crushed O'Connell and carried Free Trade, and O'Connell and the Protectionists had life enough yet to pull him down. He is as a conqueror who having won the great victory of his life is struck by a hostile hand in some by-way as he passes home to enjoy his triumph.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### FAMINE, COMMERCIAL TROUBLE, AND FOREIGN INTRIGUE.

Lord John Russell succeeded Sir Robert Peel as First Lord of the Treasury; Lord Palmerston became Foreign Secretary; Sir Charles Wood was Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Grey took charge of the Colonies; and Sir George Grey was Home Secretary. Mr. Macaulay accepted the office of Paymaster-General, with a seat in the Cabinet, a distinction not usually given to the occupant of that office. The Ministry was not particularly strong in administrative talent. The Premier and the Foreign Secretary were the only members of the Cabinet who could be called statesmen of the first class; and even Lord Palmerston had not as yet won more than a somewhat doubtful kind of fame, and was looked upon as a man quite as likely to do mischief as good to any Ministry of which he might happen to form a part. Lord Grey then and since only succeeded somehow in missing the career of a leading statesman. He had great talents and some originality; he was independent and bold. But his independence degenerated too often into impracticability and even eccentricity; and he was, in fact, a politician with whom ordinary men could not work. Sir Charles Wood, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, had solid sense and excellent administrative capacity, but he was about as bad a public speaker as ever addressed the House of Commons. His budget speeches were often made so unintelligible by defective manner and delivery that they might almost as well have been spoken in a foreign language. Sir George Grey was a speaker of fearful fluency, and a respectable administrator of the second or third class. He was as plodding in administration as he was precipitate of speech.

'Peel,' wrote Lord Palmerston to a friend a short time after the formation of the new Ministry, 'seems to have made up his mind that for a year or two he cannot hope to form a party, and that he must give people

a certain time to forget the events of last year; in the meanwhile, it is evident that he does not wish that any other Government should be formed out of the people on his side of the House, because of that Government he would not be a member. For these reasons, and also because he sincerely thinks it best that we should, for the present, remain in, he gives us very cordial support, as far as he can without losing his independent position. Graham, who sits up under his old pillar, and never comes down to Peel's bench even for personal communication, seems to keep himself aloof from everybody, and to hold himself free to act according to circumstances; but as yet he is not considered as the head of any party. George Bentinck has entirely broken down as a candidate for ministerial position; and thus we are left masters of the field, not only on account of our own merits, which, though we say it ourselves, are great, but by virtue of the absence of any efficient competitors.' Palmerston's humorous estimate of the state of affairs was accurate. The new Ministry was safe enough, because there was no party in a condition to compete with it.

The position of the Government of Lord John Russell was not one to be envied. The Irish famine occupied all attention, and soon seemed to be an evil too great for any Ministry to deal with. The failure of the potato was an overwhelming disaster for a people almost wholly agricultural and a peasantry long accustomed to live upon that root alone. Ireland contains a very few large towns; when the names of four or five are mentioned the list is done with, and we have to come to mere villages. The country has hardly any manufactures except that of linen in the northern province. In the south and west the people live by agriculture alone. The cottier system, which prevailed almost universally in three of the four provinces, was an arrangement by which a man obtained in return for his labour a right to cultivate a little patch of ground, just enough to supply him with food for the scanty maintenance of his family. The great landlords were for the most part absentees; the smaller landlords were often deeply in debt, and were therefore compelled to screw every possible penny of rent out of their tenants-at-will. They had not, however, even that regularity and order in their exactions that might at least have forced upon the tenants some habits of forethought and exactness. There was a sort of understanding that the rent was always to be somewhat in arrear; the supposed kindness of a landlord consisted in his allowing the indebtedness to increase more liberally than others of his class would do. There was a demoralising slatternliness in the whole system. It was almost certain that if a tenant, by greatly increased industry and good fortune, made the land which he held more valuable

than before, his rent would at once be increased. On the other hand, it was held an act of tyranny to dispossess him so long as he made even any fair promise of paying up. There was, therefore, a thoroughly vicious system established all round, demoralising alike to the landlord and the tenant.

Underlying all the relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland were two great facts. The occupation of land was virtually a necessity of life to the Irish tenant. That is the first fact. The second is, that the land system under which Ireland was placed was one entirely foreign to the traditions, the ideas, one might say the very genius of the Irish people. Whether the system introduced by conquest and confiscation was better than the old one or not does not in the slightest degree affect the working of this fact on the relations between the landlord and the tenant in Ireland. No one will be able to understand the whole meaning and bearing of the long land struggle in Ireland who does not clearly get into his mind the fact that, rightly or wrongly, the Irish peasant regarded the right to have a bit of land, his share, exactly as other peoples regard the right to live. It was in his mind something elementary and self-evident. He could not be loyal to, he could not even understand, any system which did not secure that to him. According to Michelet, the land is the French peasant's mistress. It was the Irish peasant's life.

The Irish peasant with his wife and his family lived on the potato. Hardly in any country coming within the pale of civilisation was there to be found a whole peasant population dependent for their living on one single root. When the potato failed in 1845 the life-system of the people seemed to have given way. At first it was not thought that the failure must necessarily be anything more than partial. But it soon began to appear that for at least two seasons the whole food of the peasant population and of the poor in towns was absolutely gone. Lord John Russell's Government pottered with the difficulty rather than encountered it. In their excuse it has to be said of course that the calamity they had to meet was unprecedented and that it must have tried the resources of the most energetic and foreseeing statesmanship. Still the fact remains that the measures of the Government were at first utterly inadequate to the occasion, and that afterwards some of them were even calculated to make bad worse. Not a county in Ireland wholly escaped the potato disease, and many of the southern and western counties were soon in actual famine. A peculiar form of fever—famine-fever it was called—began to show itself everywhere. A terrible dysentery set in as well. In some districts the people died in hundreds daily from fever, dysentery, or sheer starvation. The districts of Skibbereen, Skull, Westport and other

places obtained a ghastly supremacy in misery. In some of these districts the parochial authorities at last declined to put the ratepayers to the expense of coffins for the too frequent dead. The coroners declared it impossible to keep on holding inquests. There was no time for all the ceremonies of that kind that would have to be gone through if they made any pretence at keeping up the system of ordinary seasons. In other places where the formula was still kept up the juries added to their verdicts of death by starvation some charge of wilful murder against Lord John Russell or the Lord Lieutenant, or some other official whose supposed neglect was set down as the cause of the death. Unfortunately, the Government had to show an immense activity in the introduction of Coercion Bills and other repressive measures. It would have been impossible that in such a country as Ireland a famine of that gigantic kind should set in without bringing crimes of violence along with it. The peasantry had always hated the land tenure system; they had always been told, not surely without justice, that it was at the bottom of all their miseries; they were now under the firm conviction that the Government could have saved them if it would. What wonder then if there were bread riots and agrarian disturbances? Who can now wonder, that being so, that the Government introduced exceptional measures of repression? But it certainly had a grim and a disheartening effect on the spirits of the Irish people when it seemed as if the Government could only potter and palter with famine, but could be earnest and energetic when devising Coercion Bills.

Whatever might be said of the Government, no one could doubt the good will of the English people. In every great English community, from the metropolis downwards, subscription lists were opened and the most liberal contributions poured in. In Liverpool, for example, a great number of the merchants of the place put down a thousand pounds each. The Quakers of England sent over a delegation of their number to the specially famine-stricken districts of Ireland to administer relief. Many other sects and bodies followed the example. National Relief Associations were specially formed in England. Relief indeed began to be poured in from all countries. The United States employed some of their war vessels to send gifts of grain and other food to the starving places. In one Irish seaport the joy-bells of the town were kept ringing all day in honour of the arrival of one of these grain-laden vessels—a mournfully significant form of rejoicing surely. One of the national writers said at the time that the misery of Ireland touched 'even the heart of the Turk at the far Dardanelles, and he sent her in pity the alms of a beggar.' It was true that from Turkey as from most other countries had come some contribution

towards the relief of Irish distress. At the same time there were some very foolish performances gone through in Dublin under the sanction and patronage of the Lord Lieutenant; the solemn 'inauguration,' as it would be called by a certain class of writers now, of a public soup kitchen, devised and managed by the fashionable French cook M. Soyer, for the purpose of showing the Irish people what remarkably sustaining *potage* might be made out of the thinnest and cheapest materials. This exposition would have been well enough in a quiet and practical way, but performed as a grand national ceremony of regeneration, under the patronage of the Viceroy, and with accompaniment of brass bands and pageantry, it had a remarkably foolish and even offensive aspect. The performance was resented bitterly by many of the impatient young spirits of the national party in Dublin.

Meanwhile the misery went on deepening and broadening. It was far too great to be effectually encountered by subscriptions however generous; and the Government, meaning to do the best they could, were practically at their wits' end. The starving peasants streamed into the nearest considerable town, hoping for relief there, and found too often that there the very sources of charity were dried up. Many, very many, thus disappointed, merely lay down on the pavement and died there. Along the country roads one met everywhere groups of gaunt dim-eyed wretches, clad in miserable old sacking and wandering aimlessly with some vague idea of finding food, as the boy in the fable hoped to find the gold where the rainbow touched the earth. Many remained in their empty hovels and took death there when he came. In some regions the country seemed unpeopled for miles. A fervid national writer declared that the impression made on him by the aspect of the country then was that of 'one silent vast dissolution.' Allowing for rhetoric, there was not much exaggeration in the words. Certainly the Ireland of tradition was dissolved in the operation of that famine. The old system gave way utterly. The landlordism of the days before the famine never revived in its former strength and its peculiar ways. For the landlord class there came out of the famine the Encumbered Estates Court; for the small farmer and peasant class there floated up the American emigrant ship.

Acts and even conspiracies of violence, as we have said, began to be not uncommon throughout the country and in the cities. One peculiar symptom of the time was the glass-breaking mania that set in throughout the towns of the south and west. It is perhaps not quite reasonable to call it a mania, for it had melancholy method in it. The workhouses were overcrowded, and the authorities could not receive there or feed there one-fourth of the applicants who besieged them. Suddenly it seemed to occur to the minds of many of famine's victims that there were the prisons for which one might qualify himself, and to which, after qualification, he

could not be denied admittance. The idea was simple: go into a town, smash deliberately the windows of a shop, and some days of a gaol and of substantial food must follow. The plan became a favourite. Especially was it adopted by young girls and women. After a time the puzzled magistrates resolved to put an end to this device by refusing to inflict the punishment which these unfortunate creatures sought as a refuge and a comfort. One early result of the famine and the general breakdown of property is too significant to be allowed to pass unnoticed. Some of the landlords had been living for a long time on a baseless system, on a credit which the failure of the crops brought to a crushing test. Not a few of these were utterly broken. They could maintain their houses and halls no longer, and often were only too happy to let them to the poor law guardians to be used as extra workhouses. In the near neighbourhood of many a distressed country town the great house of the local magnate thus became a receptacle for the pauperism which could not find a refuge in the overcrowded asylums which the poor law system had already provided. The lion and the lizard, says the Persian poet, keep the halls where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep. The pauper devoured his scanty dole of Indian meal porridge in the hall where his landlord had gloried and drunk deep.

When the famine was over and its results came to be estimated, it was found that Ireland had lost about two millions of her population. She had come down from eight millions to six. This was the combined effect of starvation, of the various diseases that followed in its path gleaning where it had failed to gather, and of emigration. Long after all the direct effects of the failure of the potato had ceased, the population still continued steadily to decrease. The Irish peasant had in fact had his eyes turned, as Mr. Bright afterwards expressed it, towards the setting sun, and for long years the stream of emigration westward never abated in its volume. A new Ireland began to grow up across the Atlantic. In every great city of the United States the Irish element began to form a considerable constituent of the population. From New York to San Francisco, from St. Paul, Minnesota, to New Orleans, the Irish accent is heard in every street, and the Irish voter comes to the polling-booth ready, far too heedlessly, to vote for any politician who will tell him that America loves the green flag and hates the Saxon.

Terrible as the immediate effects of the famine were, it is impossible for any friend of Ireland to say that, on the whole, it did not bring much good with it. It first applied the scourge which was to drive out of the land a thoroughly vicious and rotten system. It first called the attention of English statesmen irresistibly to the fact that the system was bad to its

heart's core, and that nothing good could come of it. It roused the attention of the humble Irishman, too often inclined to put up with everything in the lazy spirit of a Neapolitan or a fatalist, to the fact that there was for him too a world elsewhere. The famine had indeed many a bloody afterbirth; but it gave to the world a new Ireland.

The Government, as it may be supposed, had hard work to do all this time. They had the best intentions towards Ireland, and were always indeed announcing that they had found out some new way of dealing with the distress, and modifying or withdrawing old plans. They adopted measures from time to time to expend large sums in something like systematic employment for the poor in Ireland; they modified the Irish Poor Laws; they agreed at length to suspend temporarily the Corn Laws and the Navigation Laws, so far as these related to the importation of grain. A tremendous commercial panic, causing the fall of great houses, especially in the corn trade, all over the country, called for the suspension of the Bank Charter Act of 1844, and the measures of the ministers were for the most part treated considerately and loyally by Sir Robert Peel: but a new opposition had formed itself under the nominal guidance of Lord George Bentinck, and the real inspiration of Mr. Disraeli. Lord George Bentinck brought in a bill to make a grant of sixteen millions to be expended as an advance on the construction and completion of Irish railways. This proposal was naturally very welcome to many in Ireland. It had a lavish and showy air about it; and Lord George Bentinck talked grandiosely in his speech about the readiness with which he, the Saxon, would, if his measure were carried, answer with his head for the loyalty of the Irish people. But it soon began to appear that the scheme was not so much a question of the Irish people as of certain moneyed classes who might be helped along at the expense of the English and the Irish people. Lord George Bentinck certainly had no other than a direct and single-minded purpose to do good to Ireland; but his measure would have been a failure if it had been carried. It was fairly open in some respects to the criticism of Mr. Roebuck, that it proposed to relieve Irish landlordism of its responsibilities at the expense of the British taxpayer. The measure was rejected. Lord George Bentinck was able to worry the Ministry somewhat effectively when they introduced a measure to reduce gradually the differential duties on sugar for a few years, and then replace these duties by a fixed and uniform rate. This was, in short, a proposal to apply the principle of Free Trade, instead of that of Protection, to sugar. The protective principle had in this case, however, a certain fascination about it, even for independent minds; for an exceptional protection had been retained by Sir Robert Peel in order to enable the planters in our colonies

to compensate themselves for the loss they might suffer in the transition from slavery to free labour. Lord George Bentinck therefore proposed an amendment to the resolutions of the Government, declaring it unjust and impolitic to reduce the duty on foreign slave-grown sugar, as tending to check the advance of production by British free labour, and to give a great additional stimulus to slave labour. Many sincere and independent opponents of slavery, Lord Brougham in the House of Lords among them, were caught by this view of the question. Lord George and his brilliant lieutenant at one time appeared as if they were likely to carry their point in the Commons. But it was announced that if the resolutions of the Government were defeated ministers would resign, and there was no one to take their place. Peel could not return to power; and the time was far distant yet when Mr. Disraeli could form a Ministry. The opposition crumbled away therefore, and the Government measures were carried. Lord George Bentinck made himself for a while the champion of the West India sugar-producing interest. He was a man who threw himself with enormous energy into any work he undertook; and he had got up the case of the West India planters with all the enthusiasm that inspired him in his more congenial pursuits as one of the principal men on the turf. The alliance between him and Mr. Disraeli is curious. The two men, one would think, could have had absolutely nothing in common. Mr. Disraeli knew nothing about horses and racing. Lord George Bentinck could not possibly have understood, not to say sympathised with, many of the leading ideas of his lieutenant. Yet Bentinck had evidently formed a just estimate of Disraeli's political genius; and Disraeli saw that in Bentinck were many of the special qualities which go to make a powerful party leader in England. Time has amply justified, and more than justified, Bentinck's convictions as to Disraeli; Bentinck's premature death leaves Disraeli's estimate of him an untested speculation.

There were troubles abroad as well as at home for the Government. Almost immediately on their coming into office, the project of the Spanish Marriages, concocted between Louis Philippe and his minister, M. Guizot, disturbed for a time and very seriously the good understanding between England and France. It might so far as this country was concerned have had much graver consequences, but for the fact that it bore its bitter fruits so soon for the dynasty of Louis Philippe and helped to put a new ruler on the throne of France. It is only as it affected the friendly feeling between this country and France that the question of the Spanish marriages has a place in such a work as this; but at one time it seemed likely enough to bring about consequences which would link it closely and directly with the history of England. The ambition of the French

minister and his master was to bring the throne of Spain in some way under the direct influence of France. Such a scheme had again and again been at the heart of French rulers and statesmen, and it had always failed. At least, it had always brought with it jealousy, hostility and war. Louis Philippe and his minister were untaught by the lessons of the past. The young Queen Isabella of Spain was unmarried, and of course a high degree of public anxiety existed in Europe as to her choice of a husband. No delusion can be more profound or more often exposed than that which inspires ambitious princes and enterprising statesmen to imagine that they can control nations by the influence of dynastic alliances. In every European war we see princes closely connected by marriage in arms against each other. The great political forces which bring nations into the field of battle are not to be charmed into submission by the rubbing of a princess's wedding ring. But a certain class of statesmen, a man of the order who in ordinary life would be called too clever by half, is always intriguing about royal marriages, as if thus alone he could hold in his hands the destinies of nations.

In an evil hour for themselves and their fame, Louis Philippe and his minister believed that they could obtain a virtual ownership of Spain by an ingenious marriage scheme. There was at one time a project talked of rather than actually entertained, of marrying the young Queen of Spain and her sister to the Duc d'Aumale and the Duc de Montpensier, both sons of Louis Philippe. But this would have been too daring a venture on the part of the King of the French. Apart from any objections to be entertained by other states, it was certain that England could not 'view with indifference,' as the diplomatic phrase goes, the prospect of a son of the French King occupying the throne of Spain. It may be said that, after all, it was of little concern to England who married the Queen of Spain. Spain was nothing to us. It would not follow that Spain must be the tool of France because the Spanish Queen married a son of the French King, any more than it was certain in a former day that Austria must link herself with the fortunes of the great Napoleon because he had married an Austrian princess. Probably it would have been well if England had concerned herself in no wise with the domestic affairs of Spain, and had allowed Louis Philippe to spin what ignoble plots he pleased, if the Spanish people themselves had not wit enough to see through and power enough to counteract them. At a later period France brought on herself a terrible war and a crushing defeat because her Emperor chose to believe, or allowed himself to be persuaded into believing, that the security of France would be threatened if a Prussian prince were called to the throne of Spain. The Prussian prince did not ascend that throne; but the war between France and Prussia went on: France was defeated;

and after a little the Spanish people themselves got rid of the prince whom they had consented to accept in place of the obnoxious Prussian. If the French Emperor had not interfered, it is only too probable that the Prussian prince would have gone to Madrid, reigned there for a few unstable and tremulous months, and then have been quietly sent back to his own country. But at the time of Louis Philippe's intrigues about the Spanish marriages, the statesmen of England were by no means disposed to take a cool and philosophic view of things. The idea of non-intervention had scarcely come up then, and the English minister who was chiefly concerned in foreign affairs was about the last man in the world to admit that anything could go on in Europe or elsewhere in which England was not entitled to express an opinion and to make her influence felt. The marriage, therefore, of the young Queen of Spain had been long a subject of anxious consideration in the councils of the English Government. Louis Philippe knew very well that he could not venture to marry one of his sons to the young Isabella. But he and his minister devised a scheme for securing to themselves and their policy the same effect in another way. They contrived that the Queen and her sister should be married at the same time —the Queen to her cousin, Don Francisco d'Assis, Duke of Cadiz; and her sister to the Duke de Montpensier, Louis Philippe's son. There was reason to expect that the Queen, if married to Don Francisco, would have no children, and that the wife of Louis Philippe's son, or some of her children, would come to the throne of Spain.

On the moral guilt of a plot like this it would be superfluous to dwell. Nothing in the history of the perversions of human conscience and judgment can be more extraordinary than the fact that a man like M. Guizot should have been its inspiring influence. It came with a double shock upon the Queen of England and her ministers, because they had every reason to think that Louis Philippe had bound himself by a solemn promise to discourage any such policy, When the Queen paid her visit to Louis Philippe at Eu, the king made the most distinct and the most spontaneous promise on the subject both to her Majesty and to Lord Aberdeen. The Queen's own journal says: 'The King told Lord Aberdeen as well as me he never would hear of Montpensier's marriage with the Infanta of Spain—which they are in a great fright about in England—until it was no longer a political question, which would be when the Queen is married and has children.' The King's own defence of himself afterwards, in a letter intended to be a reply to one written to his daughter, the Queen of the Belgians, by Queen Victoria, admits the fact. 'I shall tell you precisely,' he says, 'in what consists the deviation on my side. Simply in my having arranged for the marriage of the Duc de Montpensier, not

before the marriage of the Queen of Spain, for she is to be married to the Duc de Cadiz at the very moment when my son is married to the Infanta, but before the Queen has a child. That is the whole deviation; nothing more, nothing less.' This was surely deviation enough from the King's promise to justify any charge of bad faith that could be made. The objection of England and other Powers was from first to last an objection to any arrangement which might leave the succession to one of Louis Philippe's children or grandchildren. For this reason the King had given his word to Queen Victoria that he would not hear of his son's marriage with Isabella's sister until the difficulty about the succession had been removed by Isabella herself being married and having a child. Such an agreement was absolutely broken when the King arranged for the marriage of his son to the sister of Queen Isabella at the same time as Isabella's own marriage, and when, therefore, it was not certain that the young Queen would have any children. The political question, the question of succession, remained then open as before. All the objections that England and other Powers had to the marriage of the Duc de Montpensier stood out as strong as ever. It was a question of the birth of a child, and no child was born. The breach of faith was made infinitely more grave by the fact that in the public opinion of Europe Louis Philippe was set down as having brought about the marriage of the Queen of Spain with her cousin Don Francisco in the hope and belief that the union would be barren of issue, and that the wife of his son would stand on the next step of the throne.

The excuse which Louis Philippe put forward to palliate what he called his 'deviation' from the promise to the Queen was not of a nature calculated to allay the ill-feeling which his policy had aroused in England. He pleaded in substance that he had reason to believe in an intended piece of treachery on the part of the English Government, the consequences of which, if it were successful, would have been injurious to his policy, and the discovery of which therefore released him from his promise. He had found out, as he declared, that there was an intention on the part of England to put forward as a candidate for the hand of Queen Isabella, Prince Leopold of Coburg, a cousin of Prince Albert. There was so little justification for any such suspicion, that it hardly seems possible a man of Louis Philippe's shrewdness can really have entertained it. The English Government had always steadfastly declined to give any support whatever to the candidature of this young prince. Lord Aberdeen, who was then Foreign Secretary, had always taken his stand on the broad principle that the marriage of the Queen of Spain was the business of Isabella herself and of the Spanish people, and that so long as that Queen and that people were satisfied, and the interests of England were in no wise involved, the

Government of Queen Victoria would interfere in no manner. The candidature of Prince Leopold had been in the first instance a project of the Dowager Queen of Spain, Christina, a woman of intriguing character, on whose political probity no great reliance could be placed. The English Government had in the most decided and practical manner proved that they took no share in the plans of Queen Christina, and had no sympathy with them. But while the whole negotiations were going on, the defeat of Sir Robert Peel's Ministry brought Lord Palmerston into the Foreign Office in the place of Lord Aberdeen. The very name of Palmerston produced on Louis Philippe and his minister the effect vulgarly said to be wrought on a bull by the display of a red rag. Louis Philippe treasured in bitter memory the unexpected success which Palmerston had won from him in regard to Turkey and Egypt. At that time, and especially in the court of Louis Philippe, foreign politics were looked upon as the field in which the ministers of great Powers contended against each other with brag and trickery, and subtle arts of all kinds; the plain principles of integrity and truthful dealing did not seem to be regarded as properly belonging to the rules of the game. Louis Philippe probably believed in good faith that the return of Lord Palmerston to the Foreign Office must mean the renewed activity of treacherous plans against himself. This at least is the only assumption on which we can explain the King's conduct, if we do not wish to believe that he put forward excuses and pretexts which were wilful in their falsehood. Louis Philippe seized on some words in a despatch of Lord Palmerston's, in which the candidature of Prince Leopold was simply mentioned as a matter of fact; declared that these words showed that the English Government had at last openly adopted that candidature, professed himself relieved from all previous engagements, and at once hurried on the marriage between Queen Isabella and her cousin, and that of his own son with Isabella's sister. On October 10, 1846, the double marriage took place at Madrid; and on February 5 following M. Guizot told the French Chambers that the Spanish marriages constituted the first great thing France had accomplished completely single-handed in Europe since 1830.

Everyone knows what a failure this scheme proved, so far as the objects of Louis Philippe and his minister were concerned. Queen Isabella had children; Montpensier's wife did not come to the throne; and the dynasty of Louis Philippe fell before long, its fall undoubtedly hastened by the position of utter isolation and distrust in which it was placed by the scheme of the Spanish marriages and the feelings which it provoked in Europe. The fact with which we have to deal, however, is that the friendship between England and France, from which so many happy results seemed

likely to come to Europe and the cause of free government, was necessarily interrupted. It would have been impossible to trust any longer to Louis Philippe. The Queen herself entered into a correspondence with his daughter, the Queen of the Belgians, in which she expressed in the clearest and the most emphatic manner her opinion of the treachery with which England had been encountered, and suggested plainly enough her sense of the moral wrong involved in such ignoble policy. The whole transaction is but another and a most striking condemnation of that odious creed, for a long time tolerated in statecraft, that there is one moral code for private life and another for the world of politics. A man who in private affairs should act as Louis Philippe and M. Guizot acted would be justly considered infamous. It is impossible to suppose that M. Guizot at least could have so acted in private life. M. Guizot was a Protestant of a peculiarly austere type, who professed to make religious duty his guide in all things, and who doubtless did make it so in all his dealings as a private citizen. But it is only too evident that he believed the policy of States to allow of other principles than those of Christian morality. He allowed himself to be governed by the odious delusion that the interests of a State can be advanced and ought to be pursued by means which an ordinary man of decent character would scorn to employ for any object in private life. A man of any high principle would not employ such arts in private life to save all his earthly possessions and his life and the lives of his wife and children. Anyone who will take the trouble to think over the whole of this plot, for it can be called by no other name, over the ignoble object which it had in view, the base means by which it was carried out, the ruthless disregard for the inclinations, the affections, the happiness, and the morality of its principal victims; and will then think of it as carried on in private life in order to come at the reversion of some young and helpless girl's inheritance, will perhaps find it hard to understand how the shame can be any the less because the principal plotter was a king and the victims were a queen and a nation.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### CHARTISM AND YOUNG IRELAND.

The year 1848 was an era in the modern history of Europe. It was the year of unfulfilled revolutions. The fall of the dynasty of Louis Philippe may be said to have set the revolutionary tide flowing. The event in France had long been anticipated by keen-eyed observers. There are

many predictions, delivered and recorded before the revolution was yet near, which show that it ought not to have taken the world by surprise. The reign of the Bourgeois King was unsuited in its good and in its bad qualities alike to the genius and the temper of the French people. The people of France have defects enough which friends and enemies are ready to point out to them; but it can hardly be denied that they like at least the appearance of a certain splendour and magnanimity in their systems of government. This is indeed one of their weaknesses. It lays them open to the allurements of any brilliant adventurer, like the First Napoleon or the Third, who can promise them national greatness and glory at the expense perhaps of domestic liberty. But it makes them peculiarly intolerant of anything mean and sordid in a system or a ruler. There are peoples no doubt who could be persuaded, and wisely persuaded, to put up with a good deal of the ignoble and the shabby in their foreign policy for the sake of domestic comfort and tranquillity. But the French people are always impatient of anything like meanness in their rulers, and the government of Louis Philippe was especially mean. Its foreign policy was treacherous; its diplomatists were commissioned to act as tricksters; the word of a French minister at a foreign court began to be regarded as on a level of credibility with a dicer's oath. The home policy of the King was narrow-minded and repressive enough; but a man who played upon the national weakness more wisely might have persuaded his people to be content with defects at home for the sake of prestige abroad. From the hour when it became apparent in France that the nation was not respected abroad, the fall of the dynasty was only a matter of time and change. The terrible story of the de Praslin family helped to bring about the catastrophe; the alternate weakness and obstinacy of the Government forced it on; and the King's own lack of decision made it impossible that when the trial had come it could end in any way but one.

Louis Philippe fled to England, and his flight was the signal for long pent-up fires to break out all over Europe. Revolution soon was aflame over nearly all the courts and capitals of the Continent. Revolution is like an epidemic; it finds out the weak places in systems. The two European countries which being tried by it stood it best were England and Belgium. In the latter country the king made frank appeal to his people, and told them that if they wished to be rid of him he was quite willing to go. Language of this kind is new in the mouths of sovereigns; and the Belgians are a people well able to appreciate it. They declared for their King, and the shock of the revolution passed harmlessly away. In England and Ireland the effect of the events in France was instantly made manifest. The Chartist agitation, which had been much encouraged by the triumphant return of Feargus O'Connor for Nottingham at the

general election of 1847, at once came to a head. Some of the Chartist leaders called out for the dismissal of the Ministry, the dissolution of Parliament, the Charter and 'no surrender.' A national convention of Chartists began its sittings in London to arrange for a monster demonstration on April 10. Some of the speakers openly declared that the people were now quite ready to fight for their Charter. Others, more cautious, advised that no step should be taken against the law until at least it was quite certain that the people were stronger than the upholders of the existing laws. Nearly all the leading Chartists spoke of the revolution in France as an example offered in good time to the English people; and it is somewhat curious to observe how it was assumed in the most evident good faith that what we may call the wage-receiving portion of the population of these islands constitutes exclusively the English people. What the educated, the wealthy, the owners of land, the proprietors of factories, the ministers of the different denominations, the authors of books, the painters of pictures, the bench, the bar, the army, the navy, the medical profession—what all these or any of them might think with regard to any proposed constitutional changes was accounted a matter in no wise affecting the resolve of the English 'people.' The moderate men among the Chartists themselves were soon unable to secure a hearing; and the word of order went round among the body, that 'the English people' must have the Charter or a Republic. What had been done in France enthusiasts fancied might well be done in England.

It was determined to present a monster petition to the House of Commons demanding the Charter, and in fact offering a last chance to Parliament to yield quietly to the demand. The petition was to be presented by a deputation who were to be conducted by a vast procession up to the doors of the House. The procession was to be formed on Kennington Common, the space then unenclosed which is now Kennington Park, on the south side of London. There the Chartists were to be addressed by their still trusted leader Feargus O'Connor, and they were to march in military order to present their petition. The object undoubtedly was to make such a parade of physical force as should overawe the Legislature and the Government, and demonstrate the impossibility of refusing a demand backed by such a reserve of power. The idea was taken from O'Connell's policy in the monster meetings; but there were many of the Chartists who hoped for something more than a mere demonstration of physical force, and who would have been heartily glad if some untimely or unreasonable interference on the part of the authorities had led to a collision. A strong faith still survived at that day in what was grandiosely called the might of earnest numbers. Ardent young Chartists who belonged to the time of life when everything seems possible to the brave and faithful, and when

facts and examples count for nothing unless they favour one's own views, fully believed that it needed but the firing of the first shot, 'the sparkle of the first sword drawn,' to give success to the arms, though but the bare arms, of the people, and to inaugurate the reign of Liberty. Therefore, however differently and harmlessly events may have turned out, we may be certain that there went to the *rendezvous* at Kennington Common on that tenth of April many hundreds of ignorant and excitable young men, who desired nothing so much as a collision with the police and the military, and the reign of liberty to follow. The proposed procession was declared illegal, and all peaceful and loyal subjects were warned not to take any part in it. But this was exactly what the more ardent among the Chartists expected and desired to see. They were rejoiced that the Government had proclaimed the procession unlawful. Was not that the proper occasion for resolute patriots to show that they represented a cause above despotic law? Was not that the very opportunity offered to them to prove that the people were more mighty than their rulers, and that the rulers must obey or abdicate? Was not the whole sequence of proceedings thus far exactly after the pattern of the French Revolution? The people resolve that they will have a certain demonstration in a certain way; the oligarchical Government declare that they shall not do so; the people persevere, and of course the next thing must be that the Government falls, exactly as in Paris. When poor Dick Swiveller in Dickens's story is recovering from his fever, he looks forth from his miserable bed and makes up his mind that he is under the influence of some such magic spell as he has become familiar with in the 'Arabian Nights.' His poverty-stricken little nurse claps her thin hands with joy to see him alive; and Dick makes up his mind that the clapping of the hands is the sign understood of all who read Eastern romance, and that next must appear at the princess's summons the row of slaves with jars of jewels on their heads. Poor Dick, reasoning from his experiences in the 'Arabian Nights,' was not one whit more astray than enthusiastic Chartists reasoning for the sequence of English politics from the evidence of what had happened in France. The slaves with the jars of jewels on their heads were just as likely to follow the clap of the poor girl's hands, as the events that had followed a popular demonstration in Paris to follow a popular demonstration in London. To begin with, the Chartists did not represent any such power in London as the Liberal deputies of the French Chamber did in Paris. In the next place, London does not govern England, and in our time at least never did. In the third place, the English Government knew perfectly well that they were strong in the general support of the nation, and were not likely to yield for a single moment to the hesitation which sealed the fate of the French monarchy.

The Chartists fell to disputing among themselves very much as O'Connell's Repealers had done. Some were for disobeying the orders of the authorities and having the procession, and provoking rather than avoiding a collision. At a meeting of the Chartist Convention held the night before the demonstration, 'the eve of Liberty,' as some of the orators eloquently termed it, a considerable number were for going armed to Kennington Common. Feargus O'Connor had, however, sense enough still left to throw the weight of his influence against such an insane proceeding, and to insist that the demonstration must show itself to be, as it was from the first proclaimed to be, a strictly pacific proceeding. This was the parting of the ways in the Chartist, as it had been in the Repeal agitation. The more ardent spirits at once withdrew from the organisation. Those who might even at the very last have done mischief if they had remained part of the movement withdrew from it; and Chartism was left to be represented by an open-air meeting and a petition to Parliament, like all the other demonstrations that the metropolis had seen to pass, hardly heeded, across the field of politics. But the public at large was not aware that the fangs of Chartism had been drawn before it was let loose to play on Kennington Common that memorable tenth of April. London awoke in great alarm that day. The Chartists in their most sanguine moments never ascribed to themselves half the strength that honest alarmists of the *bourgeois* class were ready that morning to ascribe to them. The wildest rumours were spread abroad in many parts of the metropolis. Long before the Chartists had got together on Kennington Common at all, various remote quarters of London were filled with horrifying reports of encounters between the insurgents and the police or the military, in which the Chartists invariably had the better, and as a result of which they were marching in full force to the particular district where the momentary panic prevailed. London is worse off than most cities in such a time of alarm. It is too large for true accounts of things rapidly to diffuse themselves. In April, 1848, the street telegraph was not in use for carrying news through cities, and the rapidly succeeding editions of the cheap papers were as yet unknown. In various quarters of London, therefore, the citizen was left through the greater part of the day to all the agonies of doubt and uncertainty.

There was no lack, however, of public precautions against an outbreak of armed Chartism. The Duke of Wellington took charge of all the arrangements for guarding the public buildings and defending the metropolis generally. He acted with extreme caution, and told several influential persons that the troops were in readiness everywhere, but that they would not be seen unless an occasion actually rose for calling on their services.

The coolness and presence of mind of the stern old soldier are well illustrated in the fact that to several persons of influence and authority who came to him with suggestions for the defence of this place or that, his almost invariable answer was 'done already,' or 'done two hours ago,' or something of the kind. A vast number of Londoners enrolled themselves as special constables for the maintenance of law and order. Nearly two hundred thousand persons, it is said, were sworn in for this purpose; and it will always be told as an odd incident of that famous scare, that the Prince Louis Napoleon, then living in London, was one of those who volunteered to bear arms in the preservation of order. Not a long time was to pass away before the most lawless outrage on the order and life of a peaceful city was to be perpetrated by the special command of the man who was so ready to lend the saving aid of his constable's staff to protect English society against some poor hundreds or thousands of English working men.

The crisis, however, luckily proved not to stand in need of such saviours of society. The Chartist demonstration was a wretched failure. The separation of the Chartists who wanted force from those who wanted orderly proceedings reduced the project to nothing. The meeting on Kennington Common, so far from being a gathering of half a million of men, was not a larger concourse than a temperance demonstration had often drawn together on the same spot. Some twenty or twenty-five thousand persons were on Kennington Common, of whom at least half were said to be mere lookers-on, come to see what was to happen, and caring nothing whatever about the People's Charter. The procession was not formed, O'Connor himself strongly insisting on obedience to the orders of the authorities. There were speeches of the usual kind by O'Connor and others; and the opportunity was made available by some of the more extreme and consequently disappointed Chartists to express, in very vehement language, their not unreasonable conviction that the leaders of the convention were humbugs. The whole affair in truth was an absurd anachronism. The lovers of law and order could have desired nothing better than that it should thus come forth in the light of day and show itself. The clap of the hand was given, but the slaves with the jars of jewels did not appear. It is not that the demands of the Chartists were anachronisms or absurdities. We have already shown that many of them were just and reasonable, and that all came within the fair scope of political argument. The anachronism was in the idea that the display of physical force could any longer be needed or be allowed to settle a political controversy in England. The absurdity was in the notion that the wage-receiving classes, and they alone, are 'the people of England.'

The great Chartist petition itself, which was to have made so profound an impression on the House of Commons, proved as utter a failure as the demonstration on Kennington Common. Mr. O'Connor in presenting this portentous document boasted that it would be found to have five million seven hundred thousand signatures in round numbers. The calculation was made in very round numbers indeed. The Committee on Public Petitions were requested to make a minute examination of the document and to report to the House of Commons. The committee called in the services of a little army of law-stationers' clerks, and went to work to analyse the signatures. They found, to begin with, that the whole number of signatures, genuine or otherwise, fell short of two millions. But that was not all. The committee found in many cases that whole sheets of the petition were signed by the one hand, and that eight per cent. of the signatures were those of women. It did not need much investigation to prove that a large proportion of the signatures were not genuine. The name of the Queen, of Prince Albert, of the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, Lord John Russell, Colonel Sibthorp, and various other public personages, appeared again and again on the Chartist roll. Some of these eminent persons would appear to have carried their zeal for the People's Charter so far as to keep signing their names untiringly all over the petition. A large number of yet stranger allies would seem to have been drawn to the cause of the Charter. 'Cheeks the Marine' was a personage very familiar at that time to the readers of Captain Marryat's sea stories; and the name of that mythical hero appeared with bewildering iteration in the petition. So did 'Davy Jones;' so did various persons describing themselves as Pugnose, Flatnose, Wooden-legs, and by other such epithets acknowledging curious personal defects. We need not describe the laughter and scorn which these revelations produced. There really was not anything very marvellous in the discovery. The petition was got up in great haste, and with almost utter carelessness. Its sheets used to be sent anywhere, and left lying about anywhere, on a chance of obtaining signatures. The temptation to schoolboys and practical jokers of all kinds was irresistible. Wherever there was a mischievous hand that could get hold of a pen, there was some name of a royal personage or some Cheeks the Marine at once added to the muster-roll of the Chartists. As a matter of fact, almost all large popular petitions are found to have some such buffooneries mixed up with their serious business. The Committee on Petitions have on several occasions had reason to draw attention to the obviously fictitious nature of signatures appended to such documents. The petitions in favour of O'Connell's movement used to lie at the doors of chapels all the Sunday long in Ireland, with pen and ink ready for all who approved to sign; and

it was many a time the favourite amusement of schoolboys to scrawl down the most grotesque names and nonsensical imitations of names. But the Chartist petition had been so loudly boasted of, and the whole Chartist movement had created such a scare, that the delight of the public generally at any discovery that threw both into ridicule was overwhelming. It was made certain that the number of genuine signatures was ridiculously below the estimate formed by the Chartist leaders; and the agitation after terrifying respectability for a long time suddenly showed itself as a thing only to be laughed at. The laughter was stentorian and overwhelming. The very fact that the petition contained so many absurdities was in itself an evidence of the sincerity of those who presented it. It was not likely that they would have furnished their enemies with so easy and tempting a way of turning them into ridicule, if they had known or suspected that there was any lack of genuineness in the signatures, or that they would have provided so ready a means of decrying their truthfulness as to claim five millions of names for a document which they knew to have less than two millions. The Chartist leaders in all their doings showed a want of accurate calculation, and of the frame of mind which desires or appreciates such accuracy. The famous petition was only one other example of their habitual weakness. It did not bear testimony against their good faith.

The effect, however, of this unlucky petition on the English public mind was decisive. From that day Chartism never presented itself to the ordinary middle-class Englishman as anything but an object of ridicule. The terror of the agitation was gone. There were efforts made again and again during the year by some of the more earnest and extreme of the Chartist leaders to renew the strength of the agitation. The outbreak of the Young Ireland movement found many sympathisers among the English Chartists, more especially in its earlier stages; and some of the Chartists in London and other great English cities endeavoured to light up the fire of their agitation again by the help of some brands caught up from the pile of disaffection which Mitchel and Meagher were setting ablaze in Dublin. A monster gathering of Chartists was announced for Whit-Monday, June 12, and again the metropolis was thrown into a momentary alarm, very different in strength however from that of the famous 10th of April. Again precautions were taken by the military authorities against the possible rising of an insurrectionary mob. Nothing came of this last gasp of Chartism. The *Times* of the following day remarked that there was absolutely nothing to record, 'nothing except the blankest expectation, the most miserable gaping, gossiping, and grumbling of disappointed listeners; the standing about, the roaming to and fro, the dispersing and the sneaking home of some poor simpletons who

had wandered forth in the hope of some miraculous crisis in their affairs.' It is impossible not to pity those who were thus deceived; not to feel some regret for the earnestness, the hope, the ignorant passionate energy which were thrown away.

Nor can we feel only surprise and contempt for those who imagined that the Charter and the rule of what was called in their jargon 'the people' would do something to regenerate their miserable lot. They had at least seen that up to that time Parliament had done little for them. There had been a Parliament of aristocrats and landlords, and it had for generations troubled itself little about the class from whom Chartism was recruited. The sceptre of legislative power had passed into the hands of a Parliament made up in great measure of the wealthy middle ranks, and it had thus far shown no inclination to distress itself over much about them. Almost every single measure Parliament has passed to do any good for the wage-receiving classes and the poor generally has been passed since the time when the Chartists began to be a power. Our Corn Laws repeal, our factory acts, our sanitary legislation, our measures referring to the homes of the poor—all these have been the work of later times than those which engendered the Chartist movement. It is easy to imagine a Chartist replying in the early days of the movement to some grave remonstrances from wise legislators. He might say, 'You tell me I am mad to think the Charter can do anything for me and my class. But can you tell me what else ever has done, or tried to do, any good for them? You think I am a crazy person because I believe that a popular Parliament could make anything of the task of government. I ask you what have you and your like made of it already? Things are well enough no doubt for you and your class, a pitiful minority; but they could not be any worse for us, and we might make them better so far as the great majority are concerned. We may fairly crave a trial for our experiment. No matter how wild and absurd it may seem, it could not turn out, for the majority, any worse than your scheme has done.' It would not have been very easy then to answer a speaker who took this line of argument. In truth, there was, as we have already insisted, grievance enough to excuse the Chartist agitation, and hope enough in the scheme the Chartists proposed to warrant its fair discussion. Such movements are never to be regarded by sensible persons as the work merely of knaves and dupes.

Chartism bubbled and sputtered a little yet in some of the provincial towns and even in London. There were Chartist riots in Ashton, Lancashire, and an affray with the police and the killing, before the affray, it is painful to have to say, of one policeman. There were Chartists

arrested in Manchester on the charge of preparing insurrectionary movements. In two or three public-houses in London some Chartist juntas were arrested, and the police believed they had got evidence of a projected rising to take in the whole of the metropolis. It is not impossible that some wild and frantic schemes of the kind were talked of and partly hatched by some of the disappointed fanatics of the movement. Some of them were fiery and ignorant enough for anything; and throughout this memorable year thrones and systems kept toppling down all over Europe in a manner that might well have led feather-headed agitators to fancy that nothing was stable, and that in England too the whistle of a few conspirators might bring about a transformation scene. All this folly came to nothing but a few arrests and a few not heavy sentences. Among those tried in London on charges of sedition merely, was Mr. Ernest Jones, who was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Mr. Jones has been already spoken of as a man of position and of high culture; a poet whose verses sometimes might almost claim for their author the possession of genius. He was an orator whose speeches then and after obtained the enthusiastic admiration of John Bright. He belonged rather to the school of revolutionist which established itself as Young Ireland than to the class of the poor Fussells and Cuffeys and uneducated working men who made up the foremost ranks of the aggressive Chartist movement in its later period. He might have had a brilliant and a useful career. He outlived the Chartist era; lived to return to peaceful agitation, to hold public controversy with the eccentric and clever Professor Blackie, of Edinburgh, on the relative advantages of republicanism and monarchy, and to stand for a Parliamentary borough at the general election of 1868; and then his career was closed by death. The close was sadly premature even then. He had plunged immaturely into politics, and although a whole generation had passed away since his *début*, he was but a young man comparatively when the last scene came.

Here comes, not inappropriately, to an end the history of English Chartism. It died of publicity; of exposure to the air; of the Anti-Corn Law League; of the evident tendency of the time to settle all questions by reason, argument, and majorities; of growing education; of a strengthening sense of duty among all the more influential classes. When Sir John Campbell spoke its obituary years before, as we have seen, he treated it as simply a monster killed by the just severity of the law. Ten years' experience taught the English public to be wiser than Sir John Campbell. Chartism did not die of its own excesses; it became an anachronism; no one wanted it any more. All that was sound in its claims asserted itself and was in time conceded. But its active or aggressive influence ceased with 1848. The history of the reign of Queen

Victoria has not any further to concern itself about Chartism. Not since that year has there been serious talk or thought of any agitation asserting its claims by the use or even the display of armed force in England.

The spirit of the time had meanwhile made itself felt in a different way in Ireland. For some months before the beginning of the year the Young Ireland party had been established as a rival association to the Repealers who still believed in the policy of O'Connell. It was inevitable that O'Connell's agitation should beget some such movement. The great agitator had brought the temperament of the younger men of his party up to a fever heat, and it was out of the question that all that heat should subside in the veins of young collegians and schoolboys at the precise moment when the leader found that he had been going too far and gave the word for peace and retreat. The influence of O'Connell had been waning for a time before his death. It was a personal influence depending on his eloquence and his power, and these of course had gone down with his physical decay. The *Nation* newspaper was conducted and written for by some rising young men of high culture and remarkable talent. It was inspired in the beginning by at least one genuine poet, Mr. Thomas Davis, who unfortunately died in his youth. It had long been writing in a style of romantic and sentimental nationalism, which could hardly give much satisfaction to or derive much satisfaction from the somewhat cunning and trickish agitation which O'Connell had set going. The *Nation* and the clever youths who wrote for it were all for nationalism of the Hellenic or French type, and were disposed to laugh at constitutional agitation, and to chafe against the influence of the priests. The famine had created an immense amount of unreasonable but certainly not unnatural indignation against the Government, who were accused of having paltered with the agony and danger of the time, and having clung to the letter of the doctrines of political economy when death was invading Ireland in full force. The Young Ireland party had received a new support by the adhesion of Mr. William Smith O'Brien to their ranks. Mr. O'Brien was a man of considerable influence in Ireland. He had large property and high rank. He was connected with or related to many aristocratic families. His brother was Lord Inchiquin; the title of the marquisate of Thomond was in the family. He was undoubtedly descended from the famous Irish hero and king Brian Boru, and was almost inordinately proud of his claims of long descent. He had the highest personal character and the finest sense of honour; but his capacity for leadership of any movement was very slender. A poor speaker, with little more than an ordinary country gentleman's share of intellect, O'Brien was a well-meaning but weak and vain man, whose head at last became almost turned by the homage which

his followers and the Irish people generally paid to him. He was in short a sort of Lafayette *manqué*; under the happiest auspices he could never have been more than a successful Lafayette. But his adhesion to the cause of Young Ireland gave the movement a decided impulse. His rank, his legendary descent, his undoubted chivalry of character and purity of purpose lent a romantic interest to his appearance as the recognised leader, or at least the figure-head, of the Young Irelanders.

Smith O'Brien was a man of more mature years than most of his companions in the movement. He was some forty-three or four years of age when he took the leadership of the movement. Thomas Francis Meagher, the most brilliant orator of the party, a man who under other conditions might have risen to great distinction in public life, was then only about two or three and twenty. Mitchel and Duffy, who were regarded as elders among the Young Irelanders, were perhaps each some thirty years of age. There were many men more or less prominent in the movement who were still younger than Meagher. One of these, who afterwards rose to some distinction in America, and is long since dead, wrote a poem about the time when the Young Ireland movement was at its height, in which he commemorated sadly his attainment of his eighteenth year, and deplored that at an age when Chatterton was mighty and Keats had glimpses into spirit-land—the age of eighteen, to wit—he, this young Irish patriot, had yet accomplished nothing for his native country. Most of his companions sympathised fully with him and thought his impatience natural and reasonable. The Young Ireland agitation was at first a sort of college debating society movement, and it never became really national. It was composed for the most part of young journalists, young scholars, amateur *littérateurs*, poets *en herbe*, orators moulded on the finest patterns of Athens and the French Revolution, and aspiring youths of the Cherubino time of life, who were ambitious of distinction as heroes in the eyes of young ladies. Among the recognised leaders of the party there was hardly one in want of money. Some of them were young men of fortune, or at least the sons of wealthy parents. Not many of the dangerous revolutionary elements were to be found among these clever, respectable, and precocious youths. The Young Ireland movement was as absolutely unlike the Chartist movement in England as any political agitation could be unlike another. Unreal and unlucky as the Chartist movement proved to be, its ranks were recruited by genuine passion and genuine misery.

Before the death of O'Connell the formal secession of the Young Ireland party from the regular Repealers had taken place. It arose out of an attempt of O'Connell to force upon the whole body a declaration

condemning the use of physical force—of the sword, as it was grandiosely called—in any patriotic movement whatever. It was in itself a sign of O'Connell's failing powers and judgment that he expected to get a body of men about the age of Meagher to make a formal declaration against the weapon of Leonidas and Miltiades and all the other heroes dear to classically-instructed youth. Meagher declaimed against the idea in a burst of poetic rhetoric which made his followers believe that a new Grattan of bolder style was coming up to recall the manhood of Ireland that had been banished by the agitation of O'Connell and the priests. 'I am not one of those tame moralists,' the young orator exclaimed, 'who say that liberty is not worth one drop of blood. . . . . Against this miserable maxim the noblest virtue that has saved and sanctified humanity appears in judgment. From the blue waters of the Bay of Salamis; from the valley over which the sun stood still and lit the Israelite to victory; from the cathedral in which the sword of Poland has been sheathed in the shroud of Kosciusko; from the convent of St. Isidore where the fiery hand that rent the ensign of St. George upon the plains of Ulster has moulded into dust; from the sands of the desert where the wild genius of the Algerine so long has scared the eagle of the Pyrenees; from the ducal palace in this kingdom where the memory of the gallant and seditious Geraldine enhances more than royal favour the splendour of his race; from the solitary grave within this mute city which a dying bequest has left without an epitaph—oh! from every spot where heroism has had a sacrifice or a triumph, a voice breaks in upon the cringing crowd that cherishes this maxim, crying, Away with it—away with it!'

The reader will probably think that a generation of young men might have enjoyed as much as they could get of this sparkling declamation without much harm being done thereby to the cause of order. Only a crowd of well-educated young Irishmen fresh from college, and with the teaching of their country's history which the *Nation* was pouring out weekly in prose and poetry, could possibly have understood all its historical allusions. No harm, indeed, would have come of this graceful and poetic movement were it not for events which the Young Ireland party had no share in bringing about.

The Continental revolutions of the year 1848 suddenly converted the movement from a literary and poetical organisation into a rebellious conspiracy. The fever of that wild epoch spread itself at once over Ireland. When crowns were going down everywhere, what wonder if Hellenic Young Irelandism believed that the moment had come when the crown of the Saxon invader too was destined to fall? The French Revolution and the flight of Louis Philippe set Ireland in a rapture of hope and rebellious

joy. Lamartine became the hero of the hour. A copy of his showy, superficial 'Girondists' was in the hand of every true Young Irelander. Meagher was at once declared to be the Vergniaud of the Irish revolution. Smith O'Brien was called upon to become its Lafayette. A deputation of Young Irelanders, with O'Brien and Meagher at their head, waited upon Lamartine, and were received by him with a cool good sense which made Englishmen greatly respect his judgment and prudence, but which much disconcerted the hopes of the Young Irelanders. Many of these latter appear to have taken in their most literal sense some words of Lamartine's about the sympathy of the new French Republic with the struggles of oppressed nationalities, and to have fancied that the Republic would seriously consider the propriety of going to war with England at the request of a few young men from Ireland, headed by a country gentleman and member of Parliament. In the meantime a fresher and a stronger influence than that of O'Brien or Meagher had arisen in Young Irelandism. Young Ireland itself now split into two sections: one for immediate action, the other for caution and delay. The party of action acknowledged the leadership of John Mitchel. The organ of this section was the newspaper started by Mitchel in opposition to the *Nation*, which had grown too slow for him. The new journal was called the *United Irishman*, and in a short time it had completely distanced the *Nation* in popularity and in circulation. The deliberate policy of the *United Irishman* was to force the hand first of the Government and then of the Irish people. Mitchel had made up his mind so to rouse the passion of the people as to compel the Government to take steps for the prevention of rebellion by the arrest of some of the leaders. Then Mitchel calculated upon the populace rising to defend or rescue their heroes—and then the game would be afoot; Ireland would be entered in rebellion; and the rest would be for fate to decide.

This looks now a very wild and hopeless scheme. So of course it proved itself to be. But it did not appear so hopeless at the time, even to cool heads. At least it may be called the only scheme which had the slightest chance of success; we do not say of success in establishing the independence of Ireland, which Mitchel sought for, but in setting a genuine rebellion afoot. Mitchel was the one formidable man among the rebels of '48. He was the one man who distinctly knew what he wanted, and was prepared to run any risk to get it. He was cast in the very mould of the genuine revolutionist, and under different circumstances might have played a formidable part. He came from the northern part of the island, and was a Protestant Dissenter. It is a fact worthy of note that all the really formidable rebels Ireland has produced in modern times, from

Wolfe Tone to Mitchel, have been Protestants. Mitchel was a man of great literary talent; indeed a man of something like genius. He wrote a clear, bold, incisive prose, keen in its scorn and satire, going directly to the heart of its purpose. As mere prose some of it is worth reading even to-day for its cutting force and pitiless irony. Mitchel issued in his paper week after week a challenge to the Government to prosecute him. He poured out the most fiery sedition, and used every incentive that words could supply to rouse a hot-headed people to arms or an impatient Government to some act of severe repression. Mitchel was quite ready to make a sacrifice of himself if it were necessary. It is possible enough that he had persuaded himself into the belief that a rising in Ireland against the Government might be successful. But there is good reason to think that he would have been quite satisfied if he could have stirred up by any process a genuine and sanguinary insurrection, which would have read well in the papers and redeemed the Irish Nationalists from what he considered the disgrace of never having shown that they knew how to die for their cause. He kept on urging the people to prepare for warlike effort, and every week's *United Irishman* contained long descriptions of how to make pikes and how to use them; how to cast bullets, how to make the streets as dangerous for the hoofs of cavalry horses as Bruce made the field of Bannockburn. Some of the recipes, if we may call them so, were of a peculiarly ferocious kind. The use of vitriol was recommended among other destructive agencies. A feeling of detestation was not unnaturally aroused against Mitchel, even in the minds of many who sympathised with his general opinions; and those whom we may call the Girondists of the party somewhat shrank from him and would gladly have been rid of him. It is true that the most ferocious of these vitriolic articles were not written by him; nor did he know of the famous recommendation about the throwing of vitriol until it appeared in print. He was, however, justly and properly as well as technically responsible for all that appeared in a paper started with such a purpose as that of the *United Irishman*, and it is not even certain that he would have disapproved of the vitriol-throwing recommendation if he had known of it in time. He never disavowed it nor took any pains to show that it was not his own. The fact that he was not its author is therefore only mentioned here as a matter more or less interesting, and not at all as any excuse for Mitchel's general style of newspaper war-making. He was a fanatic, clever and fearless; he would neither have asked quarter nor given it; and undoubtedly if Ireland had had many men of his desperate resolve she would have been plunged into a bloody, an obstinate, and a disastrous contest against the strength of the British Government.

In the meantime that Government had to do something. The Lord Lieutenant could not go on for ever allowing a newspaper to scream out appeals to rebellion, and to publish every week minute descriptions of the easiest and quickest way of killing off English soldiers. The existing laws were not strong enough to deal with Mitchel and to suppress his paper. It would have been of little account to proceed against him under the ordinary laws which condemned seditious speaking or writing. Prosecutions were in fact set on foot against O'Brien, Meagher, and Mitchel himself for ordinary offences of that kind; but the accused men got bail and went on meantime speaking and writing as before, and when the cases came to be tried by a jury the Government failed to obtain a conviction. The Government therefore brought in a bill for the better security of the Crown and Government, making all written incitement to insurrection or resistance to the law felony punishable with transportation. This measure was passed rapidly through all its stages. It enabled the Government to suppress newspapers like the *United Irishman*, and to keep in prison without bail, while awaiting trial, anyone charged with an offence under the new Act. Mitchel soon gave the authorities an opportunity of testing the efficacy of the Act in his person. He repeated his incitements to insurrection, was arrested and thrown into prison. The climax of the excitement in Ireland was reached when Mitchel's trial came on. There can be little doubt that he was filled with a strong hope that his followers would attempt to rescue him. He wrote from his cell that he could hear around the walls of his prison every night the tramp of hundreds of sympathisers, 'felons in heart and soul.' The Government for their part were in full expectation that some sort of rising would take place. For the time, Smith O'Brien, Meagher, and all the other Young Irelanders were thrown into the shade, and the eyes of the whole country were turned upon Mitchel's cell. Had there been another Mitchel out of doors, as fearless and reckless as the Mitchel in the prison, a sanguinary outbreak would probably have taken place. But the leaders of the movement outside were by no means clear in their own minds as to the course they ought to pursue. Many of them were well satisfied of the hopelessness and folly of any rebellious movement, and nearly all were quite aware that in any case the country just then was wholly unprepared for anything of the kind. Not a few had a shrewd suspicion that the movement never had taken any real hold on the heart of the country. Some were jealous of Mitchel's sudden popularity, and in their secret hearts were disposed to curse him for the trouble he had brought on them. But they could not attempt to give open utterance to such a sentiment. Mitchel's boldness and resolve had placed them at a sad disadvantage. He had that superiority of influ-

ence over them that downright determination always gives a man over colleagues who do not quite know what they would have. One thing however they could do; and that they did. They discouraged any idea of an attempt to rescue Mitchel. His trial came on. He was found guilty. He made a short but powerful and impassioned speech from the dock; he was sentenced to fourteen years' transportation; he was hurried under an escort of cavalry through the streets of Dublin, put on board a ship of war, and in a few hours was on his way to Bermuda. Dublin remained perfectly quiet; the country outside hardly knew what was happening until Mitchel was well on his way, and far-seeing persons smiled to themselves and said the danger was all over.

So indeed it proved to be. The remainder of the proceedings partook rather of the nature of burlesque. The Young Ireland leaders became more demonstrative than ever. The *Nation* newspaper now went in openly for rebellion, but rebellion at some unnamed time, and when Ireland should be ready to meet the Saxon. It seemed to be assumed that the Saxon, with a characteristic love of fair play, would let his foes make all the preparations they pleased without any interference, and that when they announced themselves ready, then, but not until then, would he come forth to fight with them. Smith O'Brien went about the country holding reviews of the 'Confederates,' as the Young Irelanders called themselves. The Government, however, showed a contempt for the rules of fair play, suspended the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland, and issued warrants for the arrest of Smith O'Brien, Meagher, and other Confederate leaders. The Young Irelanders received the news of this unchivalric proceeding with an outburst of anger and surprise which was evidently genuine. They had clearly made up their minds that they were to go on playing at preparation for rebellion as long as they liked to keep up the game. They were completely puzzled by the new condition of things. It was not very clear what Leonidas or Vergniaud would have done under such circumstances; it was certain that if they were all arrested the country would not stir hand or foot in their behalf. Some of the principal leaders, therefore—Smith O'Brien, Meagher, Dillon, and others—left Dublin and went down into the country. It is not certain even yet whether they had any clear purpose of rebellion at first. It seems probable that they thought of evading arrest for a while, and trying meantime if the country was ready to follow them into an armed movement. They held a series of gatherings, which might be described as meetings of agitators or marshallings of rebels, according as one was pleased to interpret their purpose. But this sort of thing very soon drifted into rebellion. The principal body of the followers of Smith O'Brien came into collision with the police, at a place called

Ballingarry in Tipperary. They attacked a small force of police, who took refuge in the cottage of a poor widow named Cormack. The police held the house as a besieged fort, and the rebels attacked them from the famous cabbage-garden outside. The police fired a few volleys. The rebels fired, with what wretched muskets and rifles they possessed, but without harming a single policeman. After a few of them had been killed or wounded—it never was perfectly certain that any were actually killed—the rebel army dispersed, and the rebellion was all over. In a few days after poor Smith O'Brien was taken quietly at the railway station in Thurles, Tipperary. He was calmly buying a ticket for Limerick when he was recognised. He made no resistance whatever, and seemed to regard the whole mummery as at an end. He accepted his fate with the composure of a gentleman, and indeed in all the part which was left for him to play he bore himself with dignity. It is but justice to an unfortunate gentleman to say that some reports which were rather ignobly set abroad about his having showed a lack of personal courage in the Ballingarry affray were, as all will readily believe, quite untrue. Some of the police deposed that during the fight, if fight it could be called, poor O'Brien exposed his life with entire recklessness. One policeman said he could have shot him easily at several periods of the little drama, but he felt reluctant to be the slayer of the misguided descendant of the Irish kings. It afterwards appeared also that any little chance of carrying on any manner of rebellion was put a stop to by Smith O'Brien's own resolution that his rebels must not seize the private property of anyone. He insisted that his rebellion must pay its way, and the funds were soon out. The Confederate leader woke from a dream when he saw his followers dispersing after the first volley or two from the police. From that moment he behaved like a dignified gentleman, equal to the fate he had brought upon him.

Meagher and two of his companions were arrested a few days after as they were wandering hopelessly and aimlessly through the mountains of Tipperary. The prisoners were brought for trial before a special commission held at Clonmel in Tipperary, in the following September. Smith O'Brien was the first put on trial, and he was found guilty. He said a few words with grave and dignified composure, simply declaring that he had endeavoured to do his duty to his native country and that he was prepared to abide the consequences. He was sentenced to death after the old form in cases of high treason—to be hanged, beheaded, and quartered. Meagher was afterwards found guilty. Great commiseration was felt for him. His youth and his eloquence made all men and women pity him. His father was a wealthy man who had had a respected career in Parliament; and there had seemed at one time to be a bright and happy life

before young Meagher. The short address in which Meagher vindicated his actions when called upon to show cause why sentence of death should not be passed upon him, was full of manly and pathetic eloquence. He had nothing, he said, to retract or to ask pardon for. 'I am not here to crave with faltering lip the life I have consecrated to the independence of my country. . . . I offer to my country as some proof of the sincerity with which I have thought and spoken and struggled for her, the life of a young heart. . . . The history of Ireland explains my crime and justifies it. . . . Even here where the shadows of death surround me, and from which I see my early grave opening for me in no consecrated soil, the hope which beckoned me forth on that perilous sea whereon I have been wrecked animates, consoles, enraptures me. No; I do not despair of my poor old country, her peace, her liberty, her glory.'

Meagher was sentenced to death with the same hideous formalities as those which had been observed in the case of Smith O'Brien. No one, however, really believed for a moment that such a sentence was likely to be carried out in the reign of Queen Victoria. The sentence of death was changed into one of transportation for life. Nor was even this carried out. The convicts were all sent to Australia, and a few years after Meagher contrived to make his escape. He was soon followed by Mitchel. The manner of escape was at least of doubtful credit to the prisoners, for they were placed under parole, and a very nice question was raised as to whether they had not broken their parole by the attempt to escape. It was a nice question, which in the case of men of a delicate sense of honour ought, one would think, hardly to have arisen at all. The point in Mitchel's case was, that he actually went to the police court within whose jurisdiction he was, formally and publicly announced to the magistrate that he withdrew his parole, and invited the magistrate to arrest him then and there. But the magistrate was unprepared for his coming and was quite thrown off his guard. Mitchel was armed, and so was a friend who accompanied him, and who had planned and carried out the escape. They had horses waiting at the door, and when they saw that the magistrate did not know what to do, they left the court, mounted the horses, and rode away. It was contended by Mitchel and by his companion Mr. P. J. Smyth (afterwards a distinguished member of Parliament), that they had fulfilled all the conditions required by the parole and had formally and honourably withdrawn it. One is only surprised how men of honour could thus puzzle and deceive themselves. The understood condition of a parole is that a man who intends to withdraw it shall place himself before his captors in exactly the same condition as he was when on his pledged word of honour they allowed him a comparative liberty. It is evident that a prisoner

would never be allowed to go at large on parole if he were to make use of his liberty to arrange all the conditions of an escape, and when everything was ready, take his captors by surprise, tell them he was no longer bound by the conditions of the pledge, and that they might keep him if they could. It was long believed in England that Smith O'Brien had declined to have anything to do with Mitchel's escape. But it is only just to Mitchel and his advisers to say that the whole plan was submitted to O'Brien, and that it had his entire approval, and it is clear that O'Brien too could not have thought there was anything dishonourable in it. Smith O'Brien himself afterwards received a pardon on condition of his not returning to these islands; but this condition was withdrawn after a time, and he came back to Ireland. He died quietly in Wales in 1864. Mitchel settled for a while in Richmond, Virginia, and became an ardent advocate of slavery and an impassioned champion of the Southern rebellion. He returned to the North after the rebellion, and more lately came to Ireland, where, owing to some defect in the criminal law, he could not be arrested, his time of penal servitude having expired although he had not served it. He was still a hero with a certain class of the people; he was put up as a candidate for an Irish county, and elected. He was not allowed to enter the House of Commons, however; the election was declared void, and a new writ was issued. He was elected again, and some turmoil was expected, when suddenly Mitchel, who had long been in sinking health, was withdrawn from the controversy by death. He should have died before. The later years of his life were only an anti-climax. His attitude in the dock in 1848 had something of dignity and heroism in it, and even the staunchest enemies of his cause admired him. He had undoubtedly great literary ability, and if he had never reappeared in politics the world would have thought that a really brilliant light had been prematurely extinguished. Meagher served in the army of the Federal States when the war broke out, and showed much of the soldier's spirit and capacity. His end was premature and inglorious. He fell from the deck of a steamer one night; it was dark and there was a strong current running; help came too late. A false step, a dark night, and the muddy waters of the Missouri closed the career that had opened with so much promise of brightness.

Many of the conspicuous Young Irelanders rose to some distinction. Charles Gavan Duffy, the editor of the *Nation*, who was twice put on his trial after the failure of the insurrection, but whom the jury would not on either occasion convict, became a member of the House of Commons, and afterwards emigrated to the colony of Victoria. He rose to be prime Minister there, and received knighthood from the Crown and a pension from the Colonial Parliament. Thonas Darcy M'Gee, another prominent rebel, went to the United States, and thence to Canada,

where he rose to be a minister of the Crown. He was one of the most loyal supporters of the British connection. His untimely death by the hand of an assassin was lamented in England as well as in the colony he had served so well. Some of the Young Irelanders remained in the United States and won repute; others returned to England, and of these not a few entered the House of Commons and were respected there, the follies of their youth quite forgotten by their colleagues, even if not disowned by themselves. A remarkable illustration of the spirit of fairness that generally pervades the House of Commons is found in the fact that everyone there respected John Martin, who to the day of his death avowed himself, in Parliament and out of it, a consistent and unrepentant opponent of British rule in Ireland. He was respected because of the purity of his character and the transparent sincerity of his purpose. Martin had been devoted to Mitchel in his lifetime, and he died a few days after Mitchel's death.

The Young Ireland movement came and vanished like a shadow. It never had any reality or substance in it. It was a literary and poetic inspiration altogether. It never took the slightest hold of the peasantry. It hardly touched any men of mature years. It was a rather pretty playing at rebellion. It was an imitation of the French Revolution as the Girondists imitated the patriots of Greece and Rome. But it might, perhaps, have had a chance of doing memorable mischief if the policy of the one only man in the business who really was in earnest and was reckless had been carried out. It is another illustration of the fact which O'Connell's movement had exemplified before, that in Irish politics a climax cannot be repeated or recalled. There is something fitful in all Irish agitation. The national emotion can be wrought up to a certain temperature; and if at that boiling point nothing is done, the heat suddenly goes out, and no blowing of Cyclopean bellows can rekindle it. The Repeal agitation was brought up to this point when the meeting at Clontarf was convened; the dispersal of the meeting was the end of the whole agitation. With the Young Ireland movement the trial of Mitchel formed the climax. After that a wise legislator would have known that there was nothing more to fear. Petion, the revolutionary Mayor of Paris, knew that when it rained his partisans could do nothing. There were in 1848 observant Irishmen who knew that after the Mitchel climax had been reached the crowd would disperse, not to be collected again for that time.

These two agitations, the Chartist and the Young Ireland, constituted what may be called our tribute to the power of the insurrectionary spirit that was abroad over Europe in 1848. In almost every other European State revolution raised its head fiercely, and fought out its claims in the very capital, under the eyes of bewildered royalty. The whole of Italy,

from the Alps to the Straits of Messina, and from Venice to Genoa, was thrown into convulsion; 'Our Italy' once again 'shone o'er with civil swords.' There was insurrection in Berlin and in Vienna. The Emperor had to fly from the latter city as the Pope had fled from Rome. In Paris there came a Red Republican rising against a Republic that strove not to be red, and the rising was crushed by Cavaignac with a terrible strenuousness that made some of the streets of Paris literally to run with blood. It was a grim foreshadowing of the Commune of 1871. Another remarkable foreshadowing of what was to come was seen in the fact that the Prince Louis Napoleon, long an exile from France, had been allowed to return to it, and at the close of the year, in the passion for law and order at any price born of the Red Republican excesses, had been elected President of the French Republic. Hungary was in arms; Spain was in convulsion; even Switzerland was not safe. Our contribution to this general commotion was to be found in the demonstration on Kennington Common and the abortive attempt at a rising near Ballingarry. There could not possibly be a truer tribute to the solid strength of our system. Not for one moment was the political constitution of England seriously endangered. Not for one hour did the safety of our great communities require a call upon the soldiers instead of upon the police. Not one charge of cavalry was needed to put down the fiercest outburst of the rebellious spirit in England. Not one single execution took place. The meaning of this is clear. It is not that there were no grievances in our system calling for redress. It is not that the existing institutions did not bear heavily down on many classes. It is not that our political or social system was so conspicuously better than that of some European countries which were torn and ploughed up by revolution. To imagine that we owed our freedom from revolution to our freedom from serious grievance would be to misread altogether the lessons offered to our statesmen by that eventful year. We have done the work of whole generations of Reformers in the interval between this time and that. We have made peaceful reforms, political, industrial, legal, since then which, if not to be had otherwise, would have justified any appeal to revolution. There, however, we touch upon the lesson of the time. Our political and constitutional system rendered an appeal to force unnecessary and superfluous. No call to arms was needed to bring about any reform that the common judgment of the country might demand. Other peoples flew to arms because they were driven by despair; because there was no way in their political constitution for the influence of public opinion to make itself justly felt; because those who were in power held it by the force of bayonets and not of public agreement. The results of the year were on the whole unfavourable to popular liberty. The results of the year that followed were decidedly re-

actionary. The time had not come in 1848 or 1849 for Liberal principles to assert themselves. Their 'great deed,' to quote some of the words of our English poetess, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 'was too great.' We in this country were saved alike from the revolution and the reaction by the universal recognition of the fact among all who gave themselves time to think, that public opinion, being the ultimate ruling power, was the only authority to which an appeal was needed, and that in the end justice would be done. All but the very wildest spirits could afford to wait; and no revolutionary movement is really dangerous which is only the work of the wildest spirits.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### DON PACIFICO.

The name of Don Pacifico was as familiar to the world some quarter of a century ago as that of M. Jecker was about the time of the French invasion of Mexico. Don Pacifico became famous for a season as the man whose quarrel had nearly brought on a European war, caused a temporary disturbance of good relations between England and France, split up political parties in England in a manner hardly ever known before, and established the reputation of Lord Palmerston as one of the greatest Parliamentary debaters of his time. Among the memorable speeches delivered in the English House of Commons that of Lord Palmerston on the Don Pacifico debate must always take a place. It was not because the subject of the debate was a great one, or because there were any grand principles involved. The question originally in dispute was unutterably trivial and paltry; there was no particular principle involved; it was altogether what is called in commercial litigation a question of account; a controversy about the amount and time of payment of a doubtful claim. Nor was the speech delivered by Lord Palmerston one of the grand historical displays of oratory that even when the sound of them is lost send their echoes to 'roll from soul to soul.' It was not like one of Burke's great speeches, or one of Chatham's. It was not one calculated to provoke keen literary controversy, like Sheridan's celebrated 'Begum speech,' which all contemporaries held to be unrivalled, but which a later generation assumes to have been rather flashy rhetoric. There are no passages of splendid eloquence in Palmerston's Pacifico speech. Its great merit was its wonderful power as a contribution to Parliamentary argument; as a masterly appeal to the feelings, the prejudices, and the passions of the House of

Commons; as a complete Parliamentary victory over a combination of the most influential, eloquent, and heterogeneous opponents.

Don Pacifico was a Jew, a Portugeuese by extraction, but a native of Gibraltar and a British subject. His house in Athens was attacked and plundered in the open day on April 4, 1847, by an Athenian mob, who were headed, it was affirmed, by two sons of the Greek Minister of War. The attack came about in this way. It had been customary in Greek towns to celebrate Easter by burning an effigy of Judas Iscariot. In 1847 the police of Athens were ordered to prevent this performance, and the mob, disappointed of their favourite amusement, ascribed the new orders to the influence of the Jews. Don Pacifico's house happened to stand near the spot where the Judas was annually burnt; Don Pacifico was known to be a Jew; and the anger of the mob was wreaked upon him accordingly. There could be no doubt that the attack was lawless, and that the Greek authorities took no trouble to protect Pacifico against it. Don Pacifico made a claim against the Greek Government for compensation. He estimated his losses, direct and indirect, at nearly thirty-two thousand pounds sterling. Another claim was made at the same time by another British subject, a man of a very different stamp from Don Pacifico. This was Mr. Finlay, the historian of Greece. Mr. Finlay had gone out to Greece in the enthusiastic days of Byron and Cochrane and Church and Hastings; and he settled in Athens when the independence of Greece had been established. Some of his land had been taken for the purpose of rounding off the new palace gardens of King Otho; and Mr. Finlay had declined to accept the terms offered by the Greek Government, to which other landowners in the same position as himself had assented. Some stress was laid by Lord Palmerston's antagonists in the course of the debate on the fact that Mr. Finlay thus stood out apart from other landowners in Athens. Mr. Finlay, however, had a perfect right to stand out for any price he thought fit. He was in the same position as a Greek resident of London or Manchester whose land is taken for the purposes of a railway or other public improvement, and who declines to accept the amount of compensation tendered for it in the first instance. The peculiarity of the case was that Mr. Finlay was not left, as the supposed Greek gentleman assuredly would be, to make good his claims for himself in the courts of law. Neither Don Pacifico nor Mr. Finlay had appealed to the law courts at all. But about this time our Foreign Office had had several little complaints against the Greek authorities. We had taken so considerable a part in setting up Greece that our ministers not unnaturally thought Greece ought to show her gratitude by attending a little more closely to our advice. On the other hand, Lord Palmerston had made up his mind

that there was constant intrigue going on against our interests among the foreign diplomatists in Athens. He was convinced that France was perpetually plotting against us there, and that Russia was watching an opportunity to supersede, once for all, our influence by completely establishing hers. Don Pacifico's sheets, counterpanes, and gold watch had the advantage of being made the subject of a trial of strength between England on the one side, and France and Russia on the other.

There had been other complaints as well. Ionian subjects of her Majesty had sent in remonstrances against lawless or high-handed proceedings; and a midshipman of her Majesty's ship *Fantôme*, landing from a boat at night on the shore of Patras, had been arrested by mistake None of these questions would seem at first sight to wear a very grave international character. All they needed for settlement, it might be thought, was a little open discussion and the exercise of some good sense and moderation on both sides. It cannot be doubted that the Greek authorities were lax and careless, and that acts had been done which they could not justify. It is only fair to say that they do not appear to have tried to justify some of them; but they were of opinion that certain of the claims were absurdly exaggerated, and in this belief they proved to be well sustained. The Greeks were very poor, and also very dilatory; and they gave Lord Palmerston a reasonable excuse for a little impatience. Unluckily, Lord Palmerston became possessed with the idea that the French minister in Greece was secretly setting the Greek Government on to resist our claims. For the Foreign Office had made the claims ours. They had lumped up the outrages on Ionian seamen, the mistaken arrest of the midshipman (who had been released with apologies the moment his nationality and position were discovered), Mr. Finlay's land, and Don Pacifico's household furniture in one claim, converted it into a national demand, and insisted that Greece must pay up within a given time or take the consequences. Greece hesitated, and accordingly the British fleet was ordered to the Piræus. It made its appearance very promptly there, and seized all the Greek vessels belonging to the Government and to private merchants that were found within the waters.

The Greek Government appealed to France and Russia as Powers joined with us in the treaty to protect the independence of Greece France and Russia were both disposed to make bitter complaint of not having been consulted in the first instance by the British Government; nor was their feeling greatly softened by Lord Palmerston's peremptory reply that it was all a question between England and Greece, with which no other Power had any business to interfere. The Russian Government wrote an angry, and indeed an offensive remonstrance. The Russian

Foreign Minister spoke of 'the very painful impression produced upon the mind of the Emperor by the unexpected acts of violence which the British authorities had just directed against Greece;' and asked if Great Britain, 'abusing the advantages which are afforded to her by her immense maritime superiority,' intended to 'disengage herself from all obligation,' and to 'authorise all great Powers on every fitting opportunity to recognise towards the weak no other rule but their own will, no other right but their own physical strength.' The French Government, perhaps under the pressure of difficulties and uncertain affairs at home, in their unsettled state showed a better temper, and intervened only in the interests of peace and good understanding. Something like a friendly arbitration was accepted from France, and the French Government sent a special representative to Athens to try to come to terms with our minister there. The difficulties appeared likely to be adjusted. All the claims except those of Don Pacifico were matter of easy settlement, and at first the French commissioner seemed even willing to accept Don Pacifico's stupendous valuation of his household goods. But Pacifico had introduced other demands of a more shadowy character. He said that he had certain claims on the Portuguese Government, and that the papers on which these claims rested for support were destroyed in the sacking of his house, and therefore he felt entitled to ask for 26,618*l.* as compensation on that account also. The French commissioner was a little staggered at this demand, and declined to accede to it without further consideration; and as our minister, Mr. Wyse, did not believe he had any authority to abate any of the now national demand, the negotiation was for the time broken off. In the meantime, however, negotiations had still been going on between the English and French Governments in London, and these had resulted in a convention disposing of all the disputed claims. By the terms of this agreement a sum of eight thousand five hundred pounds was to be paid by the Greek Government to be divided among the various claimants; and Greece was also to pay whatever sum might be found to be fairly due on account of Don Pacifico's Portuguese claims after these had been investigated by arbitrators. This would seem a very satisfactory and honourable arrangement. But some demon of mischief appeared to have this unlucky affair in charge from the first. The two negotiations going on in London and Athens simultaneously got in each other's way. Instructions as to what had been agreed to in London were not forwarded to Athens quickly enough by the English Government, and when the French Government sent out to their commissioner the news of the convention he found that Mr. Wyse knew nothing about the matter, and had no authority which, as he conceived, would have warranted him in departing from the course

of action he was following out. Mr. Wyse, therefore, proceeded with his measures of coercion, and at length the Greek Government gave way. The convention having, however, been made in the meantime in London, there then arose a question as to whether that convention or the terms extorted at Athens should be the basis of arrangement. Over this trumpery dispute, which a few words of frank good sense and good temper on both sides would have easily settled, a new quarrel seemed at one time likely to break out between England and France. The French Government actually withdrew their ambassador, M. Drouyn de Lhuys, from London; and there was for a short time a general alarm over Europe. But the question in dispute was really too small and insignificant for any two rational governments to make it a cause of serious quarrel; and after a while our Government gave way, and agreed to an arrangement which was in the main all that France desired. When, after a long lapse of time, the arbitrators came to settle the claims of Don Pacifico, it was found that he was entitled to about one-thirtieth of the sum he had originally demanded. He had assessed all his claims on the same liberal and fanciful scale as that which he adopted in estimating the value of his household property. Don Pacifico, it seems, charged in his bill one hundred and fifty pounds sterling for a bedstead, thirty pounds for the sheets of the bed, twenty-five pounds for two coverlets, and ten pounds for a pillow-case. Cleopatra might have been contented with bed-furniture so luxurious as Don Pacifico represented himself to have in his common use. The jewellery of his wife and daughters he estimated at two thousand pounds. He gave no vouchers for any of these claims, saying that all his papers had been destroyed by the mob. It seemed too that he had always lived in a humble sort of way, and was never supposed by his neighbours to possess such splendour of ornament and household goods.

While the controversy between the English and French Governments was yet unfinished, a Parliamentary controversy between the former Government and the Opposition in the House of Lords was to begin. Lord Stanley proposed a resolution which was practically a vote of censure on the Government. The resolution in fact expressed the regret of the House to find that 'various claims against the Greek Government, doubtful in point of justice, or exaggerated in amount, have been enforced by coercive measures, directed against the commerce and people of Greece, and calculated to endanger the continuance of our friendly relations with foreign Powers.' The resolution was carried, after a debate of great spirit and energy, by a majority of thirty-seven. Lord Palmerston was not dismayed. A Ministry is seldom greatly troubled by an adverse vote in the House of Lords. The Foreign Secretary, writing about the result

of the division the following day, merely said: 'We were beaten last night in the Lords by a larger majority than we had, up to the last moment, expected; but when we took office we knew that our opponents had a larger pack in the Lords than we had, and that whenever the two packs were to be fully dealt out, theirs would show a larger number than ours.' Still it was necessary that something should be done in the Commons to counterbalance the stroke of the Lords, and accordingly Mr. Roebuck, acting as an independent member, although on this occasion in harmony with the Government, gave notice of a resolution which boldly affirmed that the principles on which the foreign policy of the Government had been regulated were 'such as were calculated to maintain the honour and dignity of this country; and in times of unexampled difficulty to preserve peace between England and the various nations of the world.' On June 24, 1850, a night memorable in Parliamentary annals as the opening night of the debate which established Lord Palmerston's position as a great leader of party, Mr. Roebuck brought forward his resolution.

A reader unaccustomed to Parliamentary tactics may fail to observe the peculiar shrewdness of the resolution. It was framed, at least it reads as if it had been framed, to accomplish one purpose, while professing to serve another. It was intended, of course, as a reply to the censure of the House of Lords. It was to proclaim to the world that the Representative Chamber had reversed the decision of the House of Peers and acquitted the Ministry. But what did Mr. Roebuck's resolution actually do? Did it affirm that the Government had acted rightly with regard to Greece? The dealings with Greece were expressly censured by the House of Lords; but Mr. Roebuck proposed to affirm that the general policy of the Ministry deserved the approval of the House of Commons. It was well known that there were many men of Liberal opinions in the House of Commons who did not approve of the course pursued with regard to Greece, but who would yet have been very sorry to give a vote which might contribute to the overthrow of a Liberal Government. The resolution was so framed as to offer to all such an opportunity of supporting the Government, and yet satisfying their consciences. For it might be thus put to them—'You think the Government were too harsh with Greece? Perhaps you are right. But this resolution does not say that they were quite free of blame in their way of dealing with Greece. It only says that their policy on the whole has been sound and successful; and of course you must admit that. They may have made a little mistake with regard to Greece; but admitting that, do you not still think that on the whole they have done very well, and much better than any Tory Ministry would be likely to do? That is all that Roebuck's resolution asks you to affirm: and you really cannot vote against it.'

A large number of Liberals were no doubt influenced by this view of the situation and by the framing of the resolution. But there were some who could not be led into any approval of the particular transaction which the resolution, if not intended to cover, would certainly be made to cover. There were others, too, who, even on the broader field opened purposely up by the resolution, honestly believed that Lord Palmerston's general policy was an incessant violation of the principle of non-intervention, and was therefore injurious to the character and the safety of the country. In a prolonged and powerful debate some of the foremost men on both sides of the House opposed and denounced the policy of the Government, for which, as everyone knew, Lord Palmerston was almost exclusively responsible. 'The allied troops who led the attack,' says Mr. Evelyn Ashley, in his Life of Lord Palmerston, 'were English Protectionists and foreign Absolutists.' It is strange that an able and usually fair-minded man should be led into such an absurdity. Lord Palmerston himself called it 'a shot fired by a foreign conspiracy aided and abetted by a domestic intrigue.' But Lord Palmerston was the minister personally assailed, and might be excused, perhaps, for believing at the moment that warring monarchs were giving the fatal wound, and that the attack on him was the work of the combined treachery of Europe. An historian looking back upon the events after an interval of a quarter of a century ought to be able to take a calmer view of things. Among the 'English Protectionists' who took a prominent part in condemning the policy of Lord Palmerston, were Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Cobden, Sir Robert Peel, Sir William Molesworth, and Mr. Sidney Herbert. In the House of Lords, Lord Brougham, Lord Canning and Lord Aberdeen had supported the resolution of Lord Stanley. The truth is, that Lord Palmerston's proceedings were fairly open to difference of judgment even on the part of the most devoted Liberals and the most independent thinkers. It did not need that a man should be a Protectionist or an Absolutist to explain his entire disapproval of such a course of conduct as that which had been followed out with regard to Greece. It seems to us now, quietly looking back at the whole story, hardly possible that a man with, for example, the temperament and the general views of Mr. Gladstone could have approved of such a policy; obviously impossible that a man like Mr. Cobden could have approved of it. These men simply followed their judgment and their conscience.

The principal interest of the debate now rests in the manner of Lord Palmerston's defence. The speech was indeed a masterpiece of Parliamentary argument and address. It was in part a complete exposition and defence of the whole course of the foreign policy which the noble speaker had directed. But although the resolution treated only of the general

policy of the Government, Lord Palmerston did not fail to make a special defence of his action towards Greece. He based his vindication of this particular chapter of his policy on the ground which, of all others, gave him most advantage in addressing a Parliamentary assembly. He contended that in all he had done he had been actuated by the resolve that the poorest claimant who bore the name of an English citizen should be protected by the whole strength of England against the oppression of a foreign government. His speech was an appeal to all the elementary emotions of manhood and citizenship and good-fellowship. To vote against him seemed to be to declare that England was unable or unwilling to protect her children. A man appeared to be guilty of an unpatriotic and ignoble act who censured the minister whose only error, if error it were, was a too proud and generous resolve to make the name of England and the rights of Englishmen respected throughout the world. A good deal of ridicule had been heaped not unnaturally on Don Pacifico, his claims, his career, and his costly bed furniture. Lord Palmerston turned that very ridicule to good account for his own cause. He repelled with a warmth of seemingly generous indignation the suggestion that because a man was lowly, pitiful, even ridiculous, even of doubtful conduct in his earlier career, therefore he was one with whom a foreign government was not bound to observe any principles of fair dealing at all. He protested against having serious things treated jocosely; as if any man in Parliament had ever treated serious things more often in a jocose spirit. He protested against having the House kept 'in a roar of laughter at the poverty of one sufferer or at the miserable habitation of another; at the nationality of one man, or the religion of another; as if because a man was poor he might be bastinadoed and tortured with impunity, as if a man who was born in Scotland might be robbed without redress, or because a man is of the Jewish persuasion he is a fair mark for any outrage.' Lord Palmerston had also a great advantage given to him by the argument of some of his opponents, that whatever the laws of a foreign country, a stranger has only to abide by them, and that a government claiming redress for any wrong done to one of its subjects is completely answered by the statement that he has suffered only as inhabitants of the country themselves have suffered. The argument against Lord Palmerston was pushed entirely too far in this instance, and it gave him one of his finest opportunities for reply. It is true as a general rule in the intercourse of nations, that a stranger who goes voluntarily into a country is expected to abide by its laws, and that his government will not protect him from their ordinary operation in every case where it may seem to press hardly or even unfairly against him. But in this understanding is always involved a distinct assumption that the

laws of the State are to be such as civilisation would properly recognise; supposing that the State in question professes to be a civilised State. It is also distinctly assumed that the State must be able and willing to enforce its own laws where they are fairly invoked on behalf of a foreigner. If, for instance, a foreigner has a just claim against some continental government, and that government will not recognise the claim, or recognising it will not satisfy it; and the government of the injured man intervenes and asks that his claim shall be met,—it would never be accounted a sufficient answer to say that many of the inhabitants of the country had been treated just in the same way and had got no redress. If there were a law in Turkey, or any other slave-owning State, that a man who could not pay his debts was liable to have his wife and daughter sold into slavery, it is certain that no government like that of England would hear of the application of such a law to the family of a poor English trader settled in Constantinople. There is no clear rule easy to be laid down; perhaps there can be no clear rule on the subject at all. But it is evident that the governments of all civilised countries do exercise a certain protectorate over their subjects in foreign countries, and do insist in extreme cases that the laws of the country shall not be applied or denied to them in a manner which a native resident might think himself compelled to endure without protest. It is not even so in the case of manifestly harsh and barbarous laws alone, or of the denial of justice in a harsh and barbarous way. The principle prevails even in regard to laws which are in themselves unexceptionable and necessary. No government, for example, will allow one of its subjects living in a foreign country to be brought under the law for the levying of the conscription there and compelled to serve in the army of a foreign State.

All this only shows that the opponents of Lord Palmerston made a mistake when they endeavoured to obtain any general assent to the principle that a minister does wrong who asks for his fellow-subjects at the hands of a foreign government any better treatment than that which the government in question administers, and without revolt, to its own people. Lord Palmerston was not the man to lose so splendid an opportunity. He really made it appear as if the question between him and his opponents was that of the protection of Englishmen abroad; as if he were anxious to look after their lives and safety, while his opponents were urging the odious principle that when once an Englishman put his foot on a foreign shore his own government renounced all intent to concern themselves with any fate that might befall him. Here was a new turn given to the debate, a new opportunity afforded to those who, while they did not approve exactly of what had been done with Greece, were nevertheless anxious to

support the general principles of Lord Palmerston's foreign policy. The speech was a marvellous appeal to what are called 'English interests.' In a peroration of thrilling power Lord Palmerston asked for the verdict of the House to decide 'whether, as the Roman in days of old held himself free from indignity when he could say "Civis Romanus sum," so also a British subject, in whatever land he may be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England will protect him against injustice and wrong.'

When Lord Palmerston closed his speech the overwhelming plaudits of the House foretold the victory he had won. It was indeed a masterpiece of telling defence. The speech occupied some five hours in delivery. It was spoken, as Mr. Gladstone afterwards said, from the dusk of one day to the dawn of the next. It was spoken without the help of a single note. Lord Palmerston always wisely thought that in order to have full command of such an audience a man should, if possible, never use notes. He was quite conscious of his own lack of the higher gifts of imagination and emotion that make the great orator; but he knew also what a splendid weapon of attack and defence was his fluency and readiness, and he was not willing to weaken the effect of its spontaneity by the interposition of a single note. All this great speech, therefore, full as it was of minute details, names, dates, figures, references of all kinds, was delivered with the same facility, the same lack of effort, the same absence of any adventitious aids to memory which characterised Palmerston's ordinary style when he answered a simple question. Nothing could be more complete than Palmerston's success. 'Civis Romanus' settled the matter. Who was in the House of Commons so rude that would not be a Roman? Who was there so lacking in patriotic spirit that would not have his countrymen as good as any Roman citizen of them all? It was to little purpose that Mr. Gladstone, in a speech of singular argumentative power, pointed out that 'a Roman citizen was the member of a privileged caste, of a victorious and conquering nation, of a nation that held all others bound down by the strong arm of power—which had one law for him and another for the rest of the world, which asserted in his favour principles which it denied to all others.' It was in vain that Mr. Gladstone asked whether Lord Palmerston thought that was the position which it would become a civilised and Christian nation like England to claim for her citizens. The glory of being a 'civis Romanus' was far too strong for any mere argument drawn from fact and common sense to combat against it. The phrase had carried the day. When Mr. Cockburn, in supporting Lord Palmerston's policy, quoted from classical authority to show that the Romans had always avenged any wrongs done to their citizens, and cited from one of Cicero's

speeches against Verres, 'Quot bella majores nostros et quanta suscepisse arbitramini, quod cives Romani injuriâ affecti, quod navicularii retenti, quod mercatores spoliati dicerentur?' the House cheered more tumultously than ever. In vain was the calm, grave, studiously moderate remonstrance of Sir Robert Peel, who, while generously declaring that Palmerston's speech 'made us all proud of the man who delivered it,' yet recorded his firm protest against the style of policy which Palmerston's eloquence had endeavoured to glorify. The victory was all with Palmerston. He had, in the words of Shakespeare's Rosalind, wrestled well and overthrown more than his enemies.

After a debate of four nights, a majority of forty-six was given for the resolution. The Ministry came out not only absolved but triumphant. The odd thing about the whole proceeding is that the ministers in general heartily disapproved of the sort of policy which Palmerston put so energetically into action—at least they disapproved, if not his principles, yet certainly his way of enforcing them. Before this debate came on Lord John Russell had made up his mind that it would be impossible for him to remain in office with Lord Palmerston as Foreign Secretary. None the less, however, did Lord John Russell defend the policy of the Foreign Office in a speech which Palmerston himself described as 'admirable and first-rate.' The ministers felt bound to stand by the actions which they had not repudiated at the time when they were done. They could not allow Lord Palmerston to be separated from them in political responsibility when they had not separated themselves from moral responsibility for his proceedings in time. Therefore they had to defend in Parliament what they did not pretend to approve in private. The theory of a Cabinet always united when attacked rendered doubtless such a course of proceeding necessary in Parliamentary tactics. It would, perhaps, be hard to make it seem quite satisfactory to the simple and unsophisticated mind. No part of our duty calls on us to attempt such a task. It was a famous victory—we must only settle the question as old Caspar disposed of the doubts about the propriety of the praise given to the Duke of Marlborough and 'our good Prince Eugene.' 'It is not telling a lie,' says some one in Thackeray, 'it is only voting with your party.' But Thackeray had never been in the House of Commons.

Of many fine speeches made during this brilliant debate we must notice one in particular. It was that of Mr. Cockburn, then member for Southampton—a speech to which allusion has already been made. Never in our time has a reputation been more suddenly, completely, and deservedly made than Mr. Cockburn won by his brilliant display of ingenious argument and stirring words. The manner of the speaker lent additional

effect to his clever and captivating eloquence. He had a clear, sweet, penetrating voice, a fluency that seemed so easy as to make listeners sometimes fancy that it ought to cost no effort, and a grace of gesture such as it must be owned the courts of law where he had had his training do not often teach. Mr. Cockburn defended the policy of Palmerston with an effect only inferior to that produced by Palmerston's own speech, and with a rhetorical grace and finish to which Palmerston made no pretension. In writing to Lord Normanby about the debate, Lord Palmerston distributed his praise to friends and enemies with that generous impartiality which was a fine part of his character. Gladstone's attack on his policy he pronounced 'a first-rate performance.' Peel and Disraeli he praised likewise. But 'as to Cockburn's,' he said, 'I do not know that I ever in the course of my life heard a better speech, from anybody, without any exception.' The effect which Cockburn's speech produced on the House was well described in the House itself by one who rose chiefly for the purpose of disputing the principles it advocated. Mr. Cobden observed that when Mr. Cockburn had concluded his speech, 'one-half of the Treasury benches were left empty while honourable members ran after one another, tumbling over each other in their haste to shake hands with the honourable and learned member.' Mr. Cockburn's career was safe from that hour. It is needless to say that he well upheld in after years the reputation he won in a night. The brilliant and sudden success of the member for Southampton was but the fitting prelude to the abiding distinction won by the Lord Chief Justice of England.

One association of profound melancholy clings to that great debate. The speech delivered by Sir Robert Peel was the last that was destined to come from his lips. The debate closed on the morning of Saturday June 29. It was nearly four o'clock when the division was taken, and Peel left the house as the sunlight was already beginning to stream into the corridors and lobbies. He went home to rest; but his sleep could not be long. He had to attend a meeting of the Royal Commissioners of the Great Industrial Exhibition at twelve, and the meeting was important. The site of the building had to be decided upon, and Prince Albert and the Commissioners generally relied greatly on the influence of Sir Robert Peel to sustain them against the clamorous objection out of doors to the choice of a place in Hyde Park. Peel went to the meeting and undertook to assume the leading part in defending the decision of the Commissioners before the House of Commons. He returned home for a short time after the meeting and then set out for a ride in the Park. He called at Buckingham Palace and wrote his name in the Queen's visiting book. Then as he was riding up Constitution Hill he stopped to talk to a young lady, a friend of

his, who was also riding. His horse suddenly shied and flung him off; and Peel clinging to the bridle, the animal fell with its knees on his shoulders. The injuries which he received proved beyond all skill of surgery. He lingered, now conscious, now delirious with pain, for two or three days; and he died about eleven o'clock on the night of July 2. Most of the members of his family and some of his dearest old friends and companions in political arms were beside him when he died. The tears of the Duke of Wellington in one House of Parliament, and the eloquence of Mr. Gladstone in the other, were expressions as fitting and adequate as might be of the universal feeling of the nation.

There was no honour which Parliament and the country would not willingly have paid to the memory of Peel. Lord John Russell proposed with the sanction of the Crown that his remains should be buried with public honours. But Peel had distinctly declared in his will that he desired his remains to lie beside those of his father and mother in the family vault at Drayton Bassett. All that Parliament and the country could do therefore was to decree a monument to him in Westminster Abbey. The offer of a peerage was made to Lady Peel, but, as might perhaps have been expected, it was declined. Lady Peel declared that her own desire was to bear no other name than that by which her husband had been known. She also explained that the express wish of her husband, recorded in his will, was that no member of his family should accept any title or other reward on account of any services Peel might have rendered to his country. No desire could have been more honourable to the statesman who had formed and expressed it; none certainly more in keeping with all that was known of the severely unselfish and unostentatious character of Sir Robert Peel. Yet there were persons found to misconstrue his meaning and to discover offence to the order of aristocracy in Peel's determination. A report went about that the great statesman's objection to the acceptance of a peerage by one of his family implied a disparagement of the order of peers and was founded on feelings of contempt or hostility to the House of Lords. Mr. Goulburn, who was one of Peel's executors, easily explained Peel's meaning, if indeed it needed explanation to any reasonable mind. Peel was impressed with the conviction that it was better for a man to be the son of his own works; and he desired that his sons, if they were to bear titles and distinctions given them by the State, should win them by their own services and worth, and not simply put them on as an inheritance from their father. As regards himself, it may well be that he thought the name under which he had made his reputation became him better than any new title. He had not looked for reward of that kind, and might well prefer to mark the fact that he

did not specially value such distinctions. Nor would it be any disparagement to the peerage—a thing which in the case of a man with Peel's opinions is utterly out of the question—to think that much of the dignity of a title depends on its long descent and its historic record, and that a fire-new, specially invented title to a man already great is a disfigurement, or at least a disguise, rather than an adornment. When titles were abolished during the great French Revolution, Mirabeau complained of being called 'Citizen Riquetti' in the official reports of the Assembly. 'With your Riquetti,' he said angrily, 'you have puzzled all Europe for days.' Europe knew Count Mirabeau, but was for some time bewildered by Citizen Riquetti. Sir Robert Peel may well have objected to a reversal of the process, and to the bewildering of Europe by disguising a famous citizen in a new peerage.

'Peel's death,' Lord Palmerston wrote to his brother a few days after, putting the remark at the close of a long letter about the recent victory of the Government and the congratulations he had personally received, 'is a great calamity, and one that seems to have had no adequate cause. He was a very bad and awkward rider, and his horse might have been sat by any better equestrian; but he seems somehow or other to have been entangled in the bridle, and to have pulled the horse to step or kneel upon him. The injury to the shoulder was severe but curable; that which killed him was a broken rib forced with great violence inwards into the lungs.' The cause of Peel's death would certainly not have been adequate, as Lord Palmerston put it, if great men needed prodigious and portentous events to bring about their end. But the stumble of a horse has been found enough in other instances too. Peel seemed destined for great things yet when he died. He was but in his sixty-third year; he was some years younger than Lord Palmerston, who may be said without exaggeration to have just achieved his first great success. Many circumstances were pointing to Peel as likely before long to be summoned again to the leadership in the government of the country. It is superfluous to say that his faculties as Parliamentary orator or statesman were not showing any signs of decay. An English public man is not supposed to show signs of decaying faculties at sixty-two. The shying horse and perhaps the bad ridership settled the question of Peel's career between them. We have already endeavoured to estimate that career and to do justice to Peel's great qualities. He was not a man of original genius, but he was one of the best administrators of other men's ideas that ever knew how and when to leave a party and to serve a country. He was never tried by the severe tests which tell whether a man is a statesman of the highest order. He was never tried as Cavour, for example, was tried, by conditions which

placed the national existence of his country in jeopardy. He had no such trials to encounter as were forced on Pitt. He was the minister of a country always peaceful, safe, and prosperous. But he was called upon at a trying moment to take a step on which assuredly much of the prosperity of the people and nearly all the hopes of his party along with his own personal reputation were imperilled. He did not want courage to take the step, and he had the judgment to take it at the right time. He bore the reproaches of that which had been his party with dignity and composure. He was undoubtedly, as Lord Beaconsfield calls him, a great member of Parliament; but he was surely also a great minister. Perhaps he only needed a profounder trial at the hands of fate to have earned the title of a great man.

To the same year belongs the close of another remarkable career. On August 26, 1850, Louis Philippe, lately King of the French, died at Claremont, the guest of England. Few men in history had gone through greater reverses. Son of Philippe Egalité, brought up in a sort of blending of luxury and scholastic self-denial, under the contrasting influence of his father and of his teacher, Madame de Genlis, a woman full at least of virtuous precept and Rousseau-like profession, he showed great force of character during the Revolution. He still regarded France as his country, though she no longer gave a throne to any of his family. He had fought like a brave young soldier at Valmy and Jemappes. '*Egalité Fils*,' says Carlyle, speaking of the young man at Valmy—'Equality Junior, a light, gallant field-officer, distinguished himself by intrepidity; it is the same intrepid individual who now, as Louis Philippe, without the Equality, struggles under sad circumstances to be called King of the French for a season.' It is he who, as Carlyle also describes it, saves his sister with such spirit and energy when Madame de Genlis with all her fine precepts would have left her behind to whatever danger. 'Behold the young Princely Brother, struggling hitherward, hastily calling; bearing the Princess in his arms. Hastily he has clutched the poor young lady up, in her very nightgown, nothing saved of her goods except the watch from the pillow; with brotherly despair he flings her in, among the band-boxes, into Genlis's chaise, into Genlis's arms. . . . The brave young Egalité has a most wild morrow to look for; but now only himself to carry through it.' The brave young Egalité had indeed a wild time before him. A wanderer, an exile, a fugitive, a teacher in Swiss and American schools; bearing many and various names as he turned to many callings and saw many lands, always perhaps keeping in mind that Danton had laid his great hand upon his head and declared that the boy must one day be King of France. Then in the whirligig of time the opportunity that long might

have seemed impossible came round at last; and the soldier, exile, college teacher, wanderer among American-Indian tribes, resident of Philadelphia, and of Bloomingdale in the New York suburbs, is King of the French. Well had Carlyle gauged his position after some years of reign when he described him 'as struggling under sad circumstances to be called King of the French for a season.' He ought to have been a great man; he had had a great training. All his promise as a man faded when his seeming success began to shine. He had apparently learned nothing of adversity; he was able to learn nothing of prosperity and greatness. Of all men whom his time had tried he ought best to have known, one might think, the vanity of human schemes, and the futility of trying to uphold thrones on false principles. He intrigued for power as if his previous experience had taught him that power once obtained was inalienable. He seemed at one time to have no real faith in anything but chicane. He made the fairest professions and did the meanest, falsest things. He talked to Queen Victoria in language that might have brought tears into a father's eyes; and he was all the time planning the detestable juggle of the Spanish marriages. He did not even seem to retain the courage of his youth. It went apparently with whatever of true, unselfish principle he had when he was yet a young soldier of the Republic. He was like our own James II., who as a youth extorted the praise of the great Turenne for his bravery, and as a king earned the scorn of the world for his pusillanimous imbecility. Some people say that there remained a gleam of perverted principle in Louis Philippe which broke out just at the close, and unluckily for him exactly at the wrong time. It is asserted that he could have put down the movement of 1848 in the beginning with one decisive word. Certainly those who began that movement were as little prepared as he for its turning out a revolution. It is generally assumed that he halted and dallied and refused to give the word of command out of sheer weakness of mind and lack of courage. But the assumption according to some is unjust. Their theory is that Louis Philippe at that moment of crisis was seized with a conscientious scruple, and believed that having been called to power by the choice of the people—called to rule not as King of France, but as King of the French; as King, that is to say, of the French people so long as they chose to have him—he was not authorised to maintain himself on that throne by force. The feeling would have been just and right if it were certain that the French people, or any majority of the French people, really wished him away and were prepared to welcome a republic. But it was hardly fair to those who set him on the throne to assume at once that he was bound to come down from it at the bidding of no matter whom, how few or how many, and without in some way trying

conclusions to see if it were the voice of France that summoned him to descend, or only the outcry of a moment and a crowd. The scruple, if it existed, lost the throne; in which we are far from saying that France suffered any great loss. We are bound to say that M. Thiers, who ought to have known, does not seem to have believed in the operation of any scruple of the kind, and ascribes the King's fall simply to blundering and to bad advice. But it would have been curiously illustrative of the odd contradictions of human nature, and especially curious as illustrating that one very odd and mixed nature, if Louis Philippe had really felt such a scruple and yielded to it. He had carried out with full deliberation, and in spite of all remonstrance, schemes which tore asunder human lives, blighted human happiness, played at dice with the destinies of whole nations and might have involved all Europe in war, and it does not seem that he ever felt one twinge of scruple or acknowledged one pang of remorse. His policy had been unutterably mean and selfish and deceitful. His very *bourgeois* virtues, on which he was so much inclined to boast himself, had been a sham; for he had carried out schemes which defied and flouted the first principles of human virtue, and made as light of the honour of women as of the integrity of man. It would humour the irony of fate if he had sacrificed his crown to a scruple which a man of really high principle would well have felt justified in banishing from his mind. One is reminded of the daughter of Macklin, the famous actor, who having made her success on the stage by appearing constantly in pieces which compelled the most liberal display of form and limbs to all the house and all the town, died of a slight injury to her knee, which she allowed to grow mortal rather than permit any doctor to look at the suffering place. In Louis Philippe's case, too, the scruple would show so oddly that even the sacrifice it entailed could scarcely make us regard it with respect.

He died in exile among us, the clever, unwise, grand, mean old man. There was a great deal about him which made him respected in private life, and when he had nothing to do with state intrigues and the foreign policy of courts. He was much liked in England, where for many years after his sons lived. But there were Englishmen who did not like him and did not readily forgive him. One of these was Lord Palmerston. Lord Palmerston wrote to his brother a few days after the death of Louis Philippe, expressing his sentiments thereupon with the utmost directness. 'The death of Louis Philippe,' he said, 'delivers me from my most artful and inveterate enemy, whose position gave him in many ways the power to injure me.' Louis Philippe always detested Lord Palmerston, and, according to Thiers, was constantly saying witty and spiteful things of the English Minister, which good-natured friends as constantly brought to

Palmerston's ears. When Lord Palmerston did not feel exactly as a good Christian ought to have felt, he at least never pretended to any such feeling. The same letter contains immediately after a reference to Sir Robert Peel. It too is characteristic. 'Though I am sorry for the death of Peel from personal regard, and because it is no doubt a great loss to the country, yet, so far as my own political position is concerned, I do not think that he was ever disposed to do me any good turn.' A little while before, Prince Albert, writing to his friend Baron Stockmar, had spoken of Peel as having somewhat unduly favoured Palmerston's foreign policy in the great Pacifico debate, or at least not having borne as severely as he might upon it, and for a certainly not selfish reason. 'He' (Peel) 'could not call the policy good, and yet he did not wish to damage the Ministry, and this solely because he considered that a Protectionist Ministry succeeding them would be dangerous to the country, and had quite determined not to take office himself. But would the fact that his health no longer admitted of his doing so have been sufficient as time went on to make his followers and friends bear with patient resignation their own permanent exclusion from office? I doubt it.' The Prince might well doubt it: if Peel had lived, it is all but certain that he would have had to take office. It is curious, however, to notice how completely Prince Albert and Lord Palmerston are at odds in their way of estimating Peel's political attitude before his death. Lord Palmerston's quiet way of setting Peel down as one who would never be disposed to do him a good turn is characteristic of the manner in which the Foreign Secretary went in for the game of politics. Palmerston was a man of kindly instincts and genial temperament. He was much loved by his friends. His feelings were always directing him towards a certain half-indolent benevolence. But the game of politics was to him like the hunting field. One cannot stop to help a friend out of a ditch or to lament over him if he is down and seriously injured. For the hour the only thing is to keep on one's way. In the political game Lord Palmerston was playing, enemies were only obstacles, and it would be absurd to pretend to be sorry when they were out of his path. Therefore, there is no affectation of generous regret for Louis Philippe. Political rivals, even if private friends, are something like obstacles too. Palmerston is of opinion that Peel would never be disposed to do him a good turn, and therefore indulges in no sentimental regret for his death. He is a loss to the country, no doubt, and personally one is sorry for him, of course, and all that: 'which done, God take King Edward to his mercy, and leave the world for me to bustle in.' The world certainly was more free henceforth for Lord Palmerston's active and unresting spirit to bustle in.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE ECCLESIASTICAL TITLES BILL.

The autumn of 1850 and the greater part of 1851 were disturbed by an agitation which seems strangely out of keeping with our present condition of religious liberty and civilisation. A struggle with the Papal Court might appear to be a practical impossibility for the England of our time. The mind has to go back some centuries to put itself into what would appear the proper framework for such events. Legislation or even agitation against Papal aggression would seem about as superfluous in our modern English days as the use of any of the once-popular charms which were believed to hinder witches of their will. The story is extraordinary, and is in many ways instructive.

For some time previous to 1850 there had been, as we have seen already, a certain movement among some scholarly, mystical men in England towards the Roman Church. We have already shown how this movement began, and how little it could fairly be said to represent any actual impulse of reaction among the English people. But it unquestionably made a profound impression in Rome. The court of Rome then saw everything through the eyes of ecclesiastics; and a Roman Catholic ecclesiastic not well acquainted with the actual conditions of English life might well be excused if, when he found that two or three great Englishmen had gone over to the Church, he fancied that they were but the vanguard of a vast popular or national movement. It is clear that the court of Rome was quite mistaken as to the religious condition of England. The most chimerical notions prevailed in the Vatican. To the eyes of Papal enthusiasm the whole English nation was only waiting for some word in season to return to the spiritual jurisdiction of Rome. The Pope had not been fortunate in many things. He had been a fugitive from his own city, and had been restored only by the force of French arms. He was a thoroughly good, pious and genial man, not seeing far into the various ways of human thought and national character; and to his mind there was nothing unreasonable in the idea that heaven might have made up for the domestic disasters of his reign by making him the instrument of the conversion of England. No better proof can be given of the manner in which he and his advisers misunderstood the English people than the step with which his sanguine zeal inspired him. The English people, even while they yet bowed to the spiritual supremacy of the Papacy, were always keenly jealous of any ecclesiastical attempt to control the political action or restrict the

national independence of England. The history of the relations between England and Rome for long generations before England had any thought of renouncing the faith of Rome might have furnished ample proof of this to anyone who gave himself the trouble to turn over a few pages of English chronicles. The Pope did not read English, and his advisers did not understand England. Accordingly he took a step, with the view of encouraging and inviting England to become converted, which was calculated specially and instantly to defeat its own purpose. Had the great majority of the English people been really drawing towards the verge of a reaction to Rome, such an act as that done by the Pope might have startled them back to their old attitude. The assumption of Papal authority over England only filled the English people with a new determination to repudiate and resist every pretension at spiritual authority on the part of the court of Rome.

The time has so completely passed away, and the supposed pretensions have come to so little, that the most zealous Protestant can afford to discuss the whole question now with absolute impartiality and unruffled calmness. Everyone can clearly see now that if the Pope was mistaken in the course he took, and if the nation in general was amply justified in resenting even a supposed attempt at foreign interference, the piece of legislation to which the occasion gave birth was not a masterpiece of statesmanship, nor was the manner in which it was carried through always creditable to the good sense of Parliament and the public. The papal aggression in itself was perhaps a measure to smile at rather than to arouse great national indignation. It consisted in the issue of a papal bull, 'given at St. Peter's, Rome, under the seal of the fisherman,' and directing the establishment in England 'of a hierarchy of bishops deriving their titles from their own sees, which we constitute by the present letter in the various apostolic districts.' It is a curious evidence of the little knowledge of England's condition possessed by the Court of Rome then, that although five-sixths at least of the Catholics in England were Irish by birth or extraction, the newly-appointed bishops were all, or nearly all, Englishmen unconnected with Ireland.

An Englishman of the present day would be probably inclined to ask, on hearing the effect of the bull, Is that all? Being told that that was all, he would probably have gone on to ask, What does it matter? Who cares whether the Pope gives new titles to his English ecclesiastics or not? What Protestant is even interested in knowing whether a certain Catholic bishop living in England is called bishop of Mesopotamia, or of Lambeth? There always were Catholic bishops in England. There were Catholic archbishops. They were free to go and come, to preach and teach as they liked; to dress as they liked; for all that nineteen out of every twenty Englishmen cared, they might have been also free to call themselves what

they liked. Any Protestant who mixed with Roman Catholics, or knew anything about their usages, knew that they were in the habit of calling their bishops 'my lord,' and their archbishops 'your grace.' He knew of course that they had not the slightest legal right to use such high-sounding titles, but this did not trouble him in the least. It was only a ceremonial intended for Catholics, and it did not give him either offence or concern. Why then should he be expected to disturb his mind because the Pope chose to direct that the English Roman Catholics should call a man Bishop of Liverpool or Archbishop of Westminster? The Pope could not compel him to call them by any such names if he did not think fit; and unless his attention had been very earnestly drawn to the fact, he never probably would have found out that any new titles had been invented for the Catholic hierarchy in England.

This was the way in which a great many Englishmen regarded the matter even then. But it must be owned that there was something about the time and manner of the papal bull calculated to offend the susceptibility of a great and independent nation. The mere fact that a certain movement towards Rome had been painfully visible in the ranks of the English Church itself was enough to make people sensitive and jealous. The plain sense of many thoroughly impartial and cool-headed Englishmen showed them that the two things were connected in the mind of the Pope, and that he had issued his bull because he thought the time was actually coming when he might begin to take measures for the spiritual annexation of England. His pretensions might be of no account in themselves; but the fact that he made them in the evident belief that they were justified by realities, produced a jarring and painful effect on the mind of England. The offence lay in the Pope's evident assumption that the change he was making was the natural result of an actual change in the national feeling of England. The anger was not against the giving of the new titles, but against the assumption of a new right to give titles representing territorial distinctions in this country. The agitation that sprang up was fiercely heated by the pastoral letter of the chief of the new hierarchy. The Pope had divided England into various dioceses, which he placed under the control of an archbishop and twelve suffragans; and the new archbishop was Cardinal Wiseman. Under the title of Archbishop of Westminster and Administrator Apostolic of the Diocese of Southwark, Cardinal Wiseman was now to reside in London. Cardinal Wiseman was already well known in England. He was of English descent on his father's side and of Irish on his mother's; he was a Spaniard by birth and a Roman by education. His family on both sides was of good position; his father came of a long line of Essex gentry. Wiseman had

held the professorship of Oriental languages in the English College at Rome, and afterwards became rector of the college. In 1840 he was appointed by the Pope one of the Vicars Apostolic in England, and held his position here as Bishop of Melipotamus *in partibus infidelium*. He was well known to be a fine scholar, an accomplished linguist, and a powerful preacher and controversialist. But he was believed also to be a man of great ecclesiastical ambition—ambition for his Church, that is to say—of singular boldness, and of much political ability. The Pope's action was set down as in great measure the work of Wiseman. The Cardinal himself was accepted in the minds of most Englishmen as a type of the regular Italian ecclesiastic—bold, clever, ambitious, and unscrupulous. The very fact of his English extraction only militated the more against him in the public feeling. He was regarded as in some sense one who had gone over to the enemy, and who was the more to be dreaded because of the knowledge he carried with him. Perhaps it is not too much to say that in the existing mood of the English people the very title of Cardinal exasperated the feeling against Wiseman. Had he come as a simple archbishop, the aggression might not have seemed so marked. The title of Cardinal brought back unwelcome memories to the English public. It reminded them of a period of their history when the forces of Rome and those of the national independence were really arrayed against each other in a struggle which Englishmen might justly look on as dangerous. Since those times there had been no cardinal in England. Did it not look ominous that a cardinal should present himself now? The first step taken by Cardinal Wiseman did not tend to charm away this feeling. He issued a pastoral letter, addressed to England, on October 7, 1850, which was set forth as 'given out of the Flaminian Gate of Rome.' This description of the letter was afterwards stated to be in accordance with one of the necessary formularies of the Church of Rome; but it was then assumed in England to be an expression of insolence and audacity intended to remind the English people that from out of Rome itself came the assertion of supremacy over them. This letter was to be read publicly in all the Roman Catholic churches in London. It addressed itself directly to the English people, and it announced that 'your beloved country has received a place among the fair churches which normally constituted form the splendid aggregate of Catholic communion; Catholic England has been restored to its orbit in the ecclesiastical firmament from which its light had long vanished; and begins now anew its course of regularly-adjusted action round the centre of unity, the source of jurisdiction, of light, and of vigour.'

It must be allowed that this was rather imprudent language to address

to a people peculiarly proud of being Protestant; a people of whom their critics say, not wholly without reason, that they are somewhat narrow and unsympathetic in their Protestantism; that their national tendency is to believe in the existence of nothing really good outside the limits of Protestantism. In England the National Church is a symbol of victory over foreign enemies and domination at home. It was not likely that the English people could regard it as anything but an offence to be told that they were resuming their place as a part of an ecclesiastical system to which they, of all peoples, looked with dislike and distrust. We are not saying that the feeling with which the great bulk of the English people regarded Cardinal Wiseman's Church was just or liberal. We are simply recording the unquestionable historical fact that such was the manner in which the English people regarded the Roman Church, in order to show how slender was the probability of their being moved to anything but anger by such expressions as those contained in Cardinal Wiseman's letter. But the letter had hardly reached England when the country was aroused by another letter coming from a very different quarter, and intended as a counterblast to the papal assumption of authority. This was Lord John Russell's famous Durham letter. Russell had the art of writing letters that exploded like bomb-shells in the midst of some controvery. His Edinburgh letter had set the Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel on to recognise the fact that something must be done with the Free Trade question; and now his Durham letter spoke the word that let loose a very torrent of English public feeling. The letter was in reply to one from the Bishop of Durham, and was dated 'Downing Street, November the 4th.' Lord John Russell condemned in the most unmeasured terms the assumption of the Pope as 'a pretension of supremacy over the realm of England, and a claim to sole and undivided sway, which is inconsistent with the Queen's supremacy, with the rights of our bishops and clergy, and with the spiritual independence of the nation as asserted even in the Roman Catholic times.' Lord John Russell went on to say that his alarm was by no means equal to his indignation; that the liberty of Protestantism had been enjoyed too long in England to allow of any successful attempt to impose a foreign yoke upon men's minds and consciences, and that the laws of the country should be carefully examined, and the propriety of adopting some additional measures deliberately considered. But Lord John Russell went further than all this. He declared that there was a danger that alarmed him more than any aggression from a foreign sovereign, and that was 'the danger within the gates from the unworthy sons of the Church of England herself.' Clergymen of that Church, he declared, had been 'leading their flocks step by step to the verge of the precipice.' What, he asked, meant

'the honour paid to saints, the claim of infallibility for the Church, the superstitious use of the sign of the Cross, the muttering of the Liturgy so as to disguise the language in which it is written, the recommendation of auricular confession, and the administration of penance and absolution?' The letter closed with a sentence which gave especial offence to Roman Catholics, but which Lord John Russell afterwards explained, and indeed the context ought to have shown, was not meant as any attack on their religion or their ceremonial. 'I have little hope that the propounders and framers of these innovations will desist from their insidious course; but I rely with confidence on the people of England; and I will not bate one jot of heart or hope so long as the glorious principles and the immortal martyrs of the Reformation shall be held in reverence by the great mass of a nation which looks with contempt on the mummeries of superstition and with scorn at the laborious endeavours which are now making to confine the intellect and enslave the soul.' It is now clear from the very terms of this letter that Lord John Russell meant to apply these words to the practices within the English Church which he had so strongly condemned in the earlier passages, and which alone, he said, he regarded with any serious alarm. But the Roman Catholics in general and the majority of persons of all sects accepted them as a denunciation of 'Popery.' The Catholics looked upon them as a declaration of war against Catholicism; the fanatical of the other side welcomed them as a trumpet-call to a new 'No Popery' agitation.

The very day after the letter appeared was the Guy Faux anniversary. All over the country the effigies of the Pope and Cardinal Wiseman took the place of the regulation 'Guy,' and were paraded and burnt amid tumultuous demonstrations. A colossal procession of 'Guys' passed down Fleet Street, the principal figure of which, a gigantic form of sixteen feet high, seated in a chariot, had to be bent down, compelled to 'veil his crest,' in order to pass under Temple Bar. This Titanic 'Guy' was the new cardinal in his red robes. In Exeter a yet more elaborate Anti-papal demonstration was made. A procession of two hundred persons in character-dresses marched round the venerable cathedral amid the varied effulgence of coloured lights. The procession represented the Pope, the new cardinal, and the Inquisition, various of the Inquisitors brandishing instruments of torture. Considerable sums of money were spent on these popular demonstrations, the only interest in which now is that they serve to illustrate the public sentiment of the hour. Mr. Disraeli good-naturedly endeavoured at once to foment the prevailing heat of public temper and at the same time to direct its fervour against the Ministry themselves, by declaring in a published letter that he could hardly blame

the Pope for supposing himself at liberty to divide England into bishoprics, seeing the encouragement he had got from the ministers themselves by the recognition they had offered to the Roman Catholic hierarchy of Ireland. 'The fact is,' Mr. Disraeli said, 'the whole question has been surrendered and decided in favour of the Pope by the present Government. The ministers who recognised the pseudo-Archbishop of Tuam as a peer and a prelate cannot object to the appointment of a pseudo-Archbishop of Westminster, even though he be a cardinal.' As a matter of fact, it was not the existing Government that had recognised the rank of the Irish Catholic prelates. The recognition had been formally arranged in January 1845 by a royal warrant or commission for carrying out the Charitable Bequests Act, which gave the Irish Catholic prelates rank immediately after the prelates of the Established Church of the same degree. But the letter of Mr. Disraeli, like that of Lord John Russell, served to inflame passions on both sides and to put the country in the worst possible mood for any manner of wholesome legislation. Never during the same generation had there been such an outburst of anger on both sides of the religious controversy. It was a curious incident in political history that Lord John Russell, who had more than any Englishman then living been identified with the principles of religious liberty, who had sat at the feet of Fox, and had for his closest friend the Catholic poet Thomas Moore, came to be regarded by Roman Catholics as the bitterest enemy of their creed and their rights of worship.

The Ministry felt that something must be done. They could not face Parliament without some piece of legislation to satisfy public feeling. Many even among the most zealous Protestants deeply regretted that Lord John Russell had written anything on the subject. Not a few Roman Catholics of position and influence bitterly lamented the indiscretion of the Papal court. The mischief, however, was now fairly afoot. The step taken by the Pope had set the country aflame. Every day crowded and tumultuous meetings were held to denounce the action of the court of Rome. Before the end of the year something like seven thousand such meetings had been held throughout the kingdom. Sometimes the Roman Catholic party mustered strong at such demonstrations, and the result was rioting and disturbance. Addresses poured in upon the Queen and the ministers calling for decided action against the assumption of Papal authority. About the same time Father Gavazzi, an Italian republican who had been a priest, came to London and began a series of lectures against the Papacy. He was a man of great rhetorical power, with a remarkable command of the eloquence of passion and denunciation. His lectures were at first given only in Italian, and therefore did not appeal to

a popular English audience. But they were reported in the papers at much length, and they contributed not a little to swell the tide of public feeling against the Pope and the court of Rome. The new Lord Chancellor, Lord Truro, created great applause and tumult at the Lord Mayor's dinner by quoting from Shakespeare the words, 'Under my feet I'll stamp thy Cardinal's hat, in spite of Pope or dignities of Church.' Charles Kean, the tragedian, was interrupted by thundering peals of applause and the rising of the whole audience to their feet when, as King John, he proclaimed that 'no Italian priest shall tithe or toll in our dominion.' Long afterwards, and when the storm seemed to have wholly died away, Cardinal Wiseman, going in a carriage through the streets of Liverpool to deliver a lecture on a purely literary subject to a general audience, was pelted with stones by a mob who remembered the Papal assumption and the passions excited by the Ecclesiastical Titles Act.

The opening of Parliament came. The Ministry had to do something. No Ministry that ever held power in England could have attempted to meet the House of Commons without some project of a measure to allay public excitement. On February 4, 1851, the Queen in person opened Parliament. Her speech contained some sentences which were listened to with the profoundest interest because they referred to the question which was agitating all England. 'The recent assumption of certain ecclesiastical titles conferred by a foreign Power has excited strong feelings in this country; and large bodies of my subjects have presented addresses to me expressing attachment to the throne and praying that such assumptions should be resisted. I have assured them of my resolution to maintain the rights of my crown and the independence of the nation against all encroachments, from whatever quarter they may proceed. I have at the same time expressed my earnest desire and firm determination, under God's blessing, to maintain unimpaired the religious liberty which is so justly prized by the people of this country.' How little of inclination to any measures dealing unfairly with Roman Catholics was in the mind of the Queen herself may be seen from a letter in which, when the excitement was at its height, she had expressed her opinion to her aunt, the Duchess of Gloucester. 'I would never have consented to anything which breathed a spirit of intolerance. Sincerely Protestant as I always have been, and always shall be, and indignant as I am at those who call themselves Protestants while they are in fact quite the contrary, I much regret the unchristian and intolerant spirit exhibited by many people at the public meetings. I cannot bear to hear the violent abuse of the Catholic religion, which is so painful and so cruel towards the many good and innocent Roman Catholics. However, we must hope and trust this

excitement will soon cease, and that the wholesome effect of it upon our own Church will be lasting.'

'The Papal aggression question,' Lord Palmerston wrote to his brother just before the opening of Parliament 'will give us some trouble, and give rise to stormy debates. Our difficulty will be to find out a measure which shall satisfy reasonable Protestants without violating those principles of liberal toleration which we are pledged to. I think we shall succeed. . . . The thing itself, in truth, is little or nothing, and does not justify the irritation. What has goaded the nation is the manner, insolent and ostentatious, in which it has been done. . . . We must bring in a measure. The country would not be satisfied without some legislative enactment. We shall make it as gentle as possible. The violent party will object to it for its mildness, and will endeavour to drive us farther.' A measure brought in only because something must be done to satisfy public opinion is not likely to be a very valuable piece of legislation. The Ministry in this case were embarrassed by the fact that they really did not particularly want to do anything except to satisfy public opinion for the moment and get rid of all the controversy. They were placed between two galling fires. On the one side were the extreme Protestants, to whom Palmerston alluded as violent, and who were eager for severe measures against the Catholics; and on the other were the Roman Catholic supporters of the Ministry, who protested against any legislation whatever on the subject. It would have been simply impossible to find any safe and satisfactory path of compromise which all could consent to walk. The Ministry did the best they could to frame a measure which should seem to do something and yet do little or nothing. Two or three days after the meeting of Parliament Lord John Russell introduced his bill to prevent the assumption by Roman Catholics of titles taken from any territory or place within the United Kingdom. The measure proposed to prohibit the use of all such titles under penalty, and to render void all acts done by or bequests made to persons under such titles. The Roman Catholic Relief Act imposed a penalty of one hundred pounds for every assumption of a title taken from an existing see. Lord John Russell proposed now to extend the penalty to the assumption of any title whatever from any place in the United Kingdom. The reception which was given to Lord John Russell's motion for leave to bring in this bill was not encouraging. Usually leave to bring in a bill is granted as a matter of course. Some few general observations of extemporaneous and guarded criticism are often made; but the common practice is to offer no opposition. On this occasion, however, it was at once made manifest that no measure, however 'gentle,' to use Lord Palmerston's word,

would be allowed to pass without obstinate opposition. Mr. Roebuck described the bill as 'one of the meanest, pettiest, and most futile measures that ever disgraced even bigotry itself.' Mr. Bright called it 'little, paltry, and miserable—a mere sham to bolster up Church ascendancy.' Mr. Disraeli declared that he would not oppose the introduction of the bill; but he spoke of it in language of as much contempt as Mr. Roebuck and Mr. Bright had used, calling it a mere piece of petty persecution. 'Was it for this,' Mr. Disraeli scornfully asked, 'that the Lord Chancellor trampled on a cardinal's hat amid the patriotic acclamations of the metropolitan municipality?' Sir Robert Inglis, on the part of the more extreme Protestants, objected to the bill on the ground that it did not go far enough. The debate on the motion for leave to bring in the bill was renewed for night after night, and the fullest promise of an angry and prolonged resistance was given. Yet so strong was the feeling in favour of some legislation, that when the division was taken, three hundred and ninety-five votes were given for the motion, and only sixty-three against it. The opponents of the measure had on their side not only all the prominent champions of religious liberty like Sir James Graham, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Bright, but also Protestant politicians of such devotion to the interests of the Church as Mr. Roundell Palmer, afterwards Lord Selborne, and Mr. Beresford Hope; and of course they had with them all the Irish Catholic members. Yet the motion for leave to bring in the bill was carried by this overwhelming majority. The ministers had at all events ample justification, so far as Parliamentary tactics were concerned, for the introduction of their measure.

If, however, we come to regard the ministerial proposal as a piece of practical legislation, the case to be made out for them is not strong, nor is the abortive result of their efforts at all surprising. They set out on the enterprise without any real interest in it, or any particular confidence in its success. It is probable that Lord John Russell alone of all the ministers had any expectation of a satisfactory result to come of the piece of legislation they were attempting. We have seen what Lord Palmerston thought on the whole subject. The ministers were, in fact, in the difficulty of all statesmen who bring in a measure, not because they themselves are clear as to its necessity or its efficacy, but because they find that something must be done to satisfy public feeling, and they do not know of anything better to do at the moment. The history of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was therefore, a history of blunder, unlucky accident, and failure from the moment it was brought in until its ignominious and ridiculous repeal many years after, and when its absolute impotence had been not merely demonstrated but forgotten

The Government at first, as we have seen, resolved to impose a penalty

on the assumption of ecclesiastical titles by Roman Catholic prelates from places in the United Kingdom, and to make null and void all acts done or bequests made in virtue of such titles. But they found that it would be absolutely impossible to apply such legislation to Ireland. In that country a Catholic hierarchy had long been tolerated, and all the functions of a regular hierarchy had been in full and formal operation. To apply the new measure to Ireland would have been virtually to repeal the Roman Catholic Relief Act and restore the penal laws. On the other hand, the ministers were not willing to make one law against titles for England and another for Ireland. They were driven, therefore, to the course of withdrawing two of the stringent clauses of the bill, and leaving it little more than a mere declaration against the assumption of unlawful titles. But by doing this they furnished stronger reasons for opposition to both of the two very different parties who had hitherto denounced their way of dealing with the crisis. Those who thought the bill did not go far enough before were of course indignant at the proposal to shear it of whatever little force it had originally possessed. They, on the other hand, who had opposed it as a breach of the principle of religious liberty could now ridicule it with all the greater effect on the ground that it violated a principle without even the pretext of doing any practical good as a compensation. In the first instance, the Ministry might plead that the crisis was exceptional; that it called for exceptional measures; that something must be done; and that they could not stand on ceremony even with the principle of religious liberty when the interest of the State was at stake. Now they left it in the power of their opponents to say that they were breaking a principle for the sake of introducing a nonentity.

The debates were long, fierce, and often passionate. The bill, even cut down as it was, had a vast majority on its side. But some of the most illustrious names in the House of Commons were recorded against it; by far the most eloquent voices in the House were raised to condemn it. The Irish Roman Catholic members set up a persistent opposition to it, and up to a certain period of its progress put in requisition all the forms of the House to impede it. This part of the story ought not to be passed over without mention of the fact that among other effects produced by the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, perhaps the most distinct was the creation of the most worthless band of agitators who ever pretended to speak with the voice of Ireland. These were the men who were called in the House 'the Pope's Brass Band,' and who were regarded with as much dislike and distrust by all intelligent Irish Catholics and Irish Nationalists as by the most inveterate Tories. These men leaped into influence by their denunciations of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. They were successful for a time in palming

themselves off as patriots upon Irish constituencies. They thundered against the bill; they put in motion every mechanism of delay and obstruction; some of them were really clever and eloquent; most of them were loud-voiced; they had a grand and heaven-sent opportunity given to them, and they made use of it. They had a leader, the once famous John Sadleir. This man possessed marked ability, and was further gifted with an unscrupulous audacity at least equal to his ability. He went to work deliberately to create for himself a band of followers by whose help he might mount to power. He was a financial swindler as well as a political adventurer. By means of the money he had suddenly acquired and by virtue of his furious denunciations of the Anti-Catholic policy of the Government, he was for a time able to work the Irish popular constituencies so as to get his own followers into the House and become for the hour a sort of little O'Connell. He had with him some two or three honest men, whom he deluded into a belief in the sincerity of himself and his gang of swindling adventurers; and it is only fair to say that by far the most eloquent man of the party appears to have been one of those on whom Sadleir was thus able to impose. Mr. Sadleir's band afterwards came to sad grief. He committed suicide himself to escape the punishment of his frauds; some of his associates fled to foreign countries and hid themselves under feigned names. James Sadleir, brother and accomplice of John, was among these, and underwent that rare mark of degradation in our days, a formal expulsion from the House of Commons. The Pope's Brass Band and its subsequent history, culminating in the suicide on Hampstead Heath, was about the only practical result of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.

The bill, reduced in stringency as has been described, made, however, some progress through the House. It was interrupted at one stage by events which had nothing to do with its history. The Government got into trouble of another kind. At the opening of the session Mr. Disraeli introduced a motion to the effect that the agricultural distress of the country called upon the Government to introduce without delay some measures for its relief. This motion was in fact the last spasmodic cry of Protection. Many influential politicians still believed that the cause of Protection was not wholly lost; that a reaction was possible; that the Free Trade doctrine would prove a failure and have to be given up; and they regarded Mr. Disraeli's as a very important motion calling for a strenuous effort in its favour. The Government treated the motion as one for restored Protection, and threw all their strength into the struggle against it. They won; but only by a majority of fourteen. A few days after, Mr. Locke King, member for East Surrey, asked for leave to bring in a bill to assimilate the county franchise to that existing in boroughs. Lord John Russell opposed the

motion, and the Government were defeated by 100 votes against 52. It was evident that this was only what is called a 'snap' vote; that the House was taken by surprise, and that the result in no wise represented the general feeling of Parliament. But still it was a vexatious occurrence for the Ministry, already humiliated by the small majority they had obtained on Disraeli's motion. Their budget had already been received with very general marks of dissatisfaction. The Chancellor of the Exchequer only proposed a partial and qualified repeal of the window tax, an impost which was justly detested, and he continued the income tax. The budget was introduced shortly before Mr. Locke King's motion, and every day that had elapsed since its introduction only more and more developed the public dissatisfaction with which it was regarded. Under all these circumstances Lord John Russell felt that he had no alternative but to tender his resignation to the Queen. Leaving his Ecclesiastical Titles Bill suspended in air, he announced that he could no longer think of carrying on the government of the country.

The question was, who should succeed him. The Queen sent for Lord Stanley, afterwards Lord Derby. Lord Stanley offered to do his best to form a Government, but was not at all sanguine about the success of the task nor eager to undertake it. He even recommended that before he made any experiment Lord John Russell should try if he could not do something by getting some of the Peelites, as they were then beginning to be called—the followers of Sir Robert Peel who had held with him to the last—to join him and thus patch up the Government anew. This was tried, and failed. The Peelites would have nothing to do with the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, and Lord John Russell would not go on without it. On the other hand, Lord Aberdeen, the chief of the Peelites in the House of Lords, would not attempt to form a Ministry of his own, frankly acknowledging that in the existing temper of the country it would be impossible for any Government to get on without legislating in some way on the Papal aggression. There was nothing for it but for Lord Stanley to try. He tried without hope, and of course he was unsuccessful. The position of parties was very peculiar. It was impossible to form any combination which could really agree upon anything. There were three parties out of which a Ministry might be formed. These were the Whigs, the Conservatives, and the Peelites. The Peelites were a very rising and promising body of men. Among them were Sir James Graham, Lord Canning, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Sidney Herbert, Mr. Cardwell, and some others almost equally well known. Only these three groups were fairly in the competition for office; for the idea of a Ministry of Radicals and Manchester men was not then likely to present itself to any official mind

But how could anyone put together a Ministry formed from a combination of these three? The Peelites would not coalesce with the Tories because of the Protection question, to which Mr. Disraeli's motion had given a new semblance of vitality, and because of Lord Stanley's own declaration that he still regarded the policy of Free Trade as only an experiment. The Peelites would not combine with the Whigs because of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. The Conservatives would not disavow protective ideas; the Whigs would not give up the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. No statesman, therefore, could form a Government without having to count on two great parties being against him on one question or the other. All manner of delays took place. The Duke of Wellington was consulted. Lord Lansdowne was consulted. The wit of man could suggest nothing satisfactory. The conditions for extracting any satisfactory solution did not exist. There was nothing better to be done than to ask the ministers who had resigned to resume their places and muddle on as they best could. It is not enough to say that there was nothing better to be done: there was nothing else to be done. They were at all events still administering the affairs of the country, and no one would relieve them of the task. *Ipso facto* they had to stay.

The ministers returned to their places and resumed the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. It was then that they made the change in its conditions which has already been mentioned, and thus created new argument against them on both sides of the House of Commons. They struck out of the bill every word that might appear like an encroachment on the Roman Church within the sphere of its own ecclesiastical operations, and made it simply an Act against the public and ostentatious assumption of illegal titles. The bill was wrangled over until the end of June, and then a large number, some seventy, of the Irish Catholic members publicly seceded from the discussion and announced that they would take no further part in the divisions. On this some of the strongest opponents of the Papal aggression, led by Sir Frederick Thesiger, afterwards Lord Chelmsford, brought in a series of resolutions intended to make the bill more stringent than it had been even as originally introduced. The object of the resolutions was principally to give the power of prosecuting and claiming a penalty to anybody, provided he obtained the consent of the law officers of the Crown, and to make penal the introduction of bulls. The Government opposed the introduction of these amendments, and were put in the awkward position of having to act as antagonists of the party in the country who represented the strongest hostility to the Papal aggression. Thus for the moment the author of the Durham letter was seemingly converted into a champion of the Roman Catholic side of the controversy. His championship was ineffective. The Irish members took no part in the con-

troversy, and the Government were beaten by the ultra-Protestant party on every division. Lord John Russell was bitterly taunted by various of his opponents, and was asked with indignation why he did not withdraw the bill when it ceased to be any longer his own scheme. He probably thought by this time that it really made very little matter what bill was passed so long as any bill was passed, and that the best thing to do was to get the controversy out of the way by any process. He did not therefore withdraw the bill, although Sir Frederick Thesiger carried all his stringent clauses. When the measure came on for a third reading, Lord John Russell moved the omission of the added clauses, but he was defeated by large majorities. The bill was done with so far as the House of Commons was concerned. After an eloquent and powerful protest from Mr. Gladstone against the measure, as one disparaging to the great principle of religious freedom, the bill was read a third time. It went up to the House of Lords, was passed there without alteration although not without opposition, and soon after received the Royal assent.

This was practically the last the world heard about it. In the Roman Church everything went on as before. The new Cardinal Archbishop still called himself Archbishop of Westminster; some of the Irish prelates made a point of ostentatiously using their territorial titles, in letters addressed to the ministers themselves. The bitterness of feeling which the Papal aggression and the legislation against it had called up did not indeed pass away very soon. It broke out again and again, sometimes in the form of very serious riot. It turned away at many an election the eyes and minds of the constituencies from questions of profound and genuine public interest to dogmatic controversy and the hates of jarring sectaries. It furnished political capital for John Sadleir and his band, and kept them flourishing for a while; and it set up in the Irish popular mind a purely imaginary figure of Lord John Russell, who became regarded as the malign enemy of the Catholic faith and of all religious liberty. But save for the quarrels aroused at the time, the act of the Pope and the Act of Parliament were alike dead letters. Nothing came of the Papal bull. England was not restored to the communion of the Roman Catholic Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London retained their places and their spiritual jurisdiction as before. Cardinal Wiseman remained only a prelate of Roman Catholics. On the other hand, the Ecclesiastical Titles Act was never put in force. Nobody troubled about it. Many years after, in 1871, it was quietly repealed. It died in such obscurity that the outer public hardly knew whether it was above ground or below. Certainly, if the whole agitation showed that England was thoroughly Protestant, it also showed that English Pro-

testants had not much of the persecuting spirit. They had no inclination to molest their Catholic neighbours, and only asked to be let alone. The Pope, they believed, had insulted them; they resented the insult: that was all.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE EXHIBITION IN HYDE PARK.

THE first of May, 1851, will always be memorable as the day on which the Great Exhibition was opened in Hyde Park. The year 1851, indeed, is generally associated in the memory of Englishmen with that first Great International Exhibition. As we look back upon it pleasant recollections come up of the great glass palace in Hyde Park, the palace 'upspringing from the verdant sod,' which Thackeray described so gracefully and with so much poetic feeling. The strange crowds of the curious of all provinces and all nations are seen again. The marvellous, and at that time wholly unprecedented, collections of the products of all countries; the glitter of the Koh-i-Noor, the palm trees beneath the glass roof, the leaping fountains, the statuary, the ores, the ingots, the huge blocks of coal, the lacework, the loom-work, the Oriental stuffs—all these made on the mind of the ordinary inexpert a confused impression of lavishness and profusion and order and fantastic beauty which was then wholly novel, and could hardly be recalled except in mere memory. The novelty of the experiment was that which made it specially memorable. Many exhibitions of a similar kind have taken place since. Some of these far surpassed that of Hyde Park in the splendour and variety of the collections brought together. Two of them at least—those of Paris in 1867 and 1878—were infinitely superior in the array and display of the products, the dresses, the inhabitants of far-divided countries. But the impression which the Hyde Park Exhibition made upon the ordinary mind was like that of the boy's first visit to the play—an impression never to be equalled, no matter by what far superior charm of spectacle it may in after years again and again be followed.

Golden indeed were the expectations with which hopeful people welcomed the Exhibition of 1851. It was the first organised to gather all the representatives of the world's industry into one great fair; and there were those who seriously expected that men who had once been prevailed upon to meet together in friendly and peaceful rivalry would never again be persuaded to meet in rivalry of a fiercer kind. It seems extraordinary now to think that any sane person can have indulged in such expectations,

or can have imagined that the tremendous forces generated by the rival interests, ambitions, and passions of races could be subdued into harmonious co-operation by the good sense and good feeling born of a friendly meeting. The Hyde Park Exhibition and all the exhibitions that followed it have not as yet made the slightest perceptible difference in the warlike tendencies of nations. The Hyde Park Exhibition was often described as the festival to open the long reign of Peace. It might as a mere matter of chronology be called without any impropriety the festival to celebrate the close of the short reign of Peace. From that year, 1851, it may be said fairly enough that the world has hardly known a week of peace. The *coup d'état* in France closed the year. The Crimean War began almost immediately after, and was followed by the Indian Mutiny, and that by the war between France and Austria, the long civil war in the United States, the Neapolitan enterprises of Garibaldi, and the Mexican intervention, until we come to the war between Austria, Prussia, and Denmark; the short sharp struggle for German supremacy between Austria and Prussia, the war between France and Germany, and the war between Russia and Turkey. Such were, in brief summary, the events that quickly followed the great inaugurating Festival of Peace in 1851. Of course those who organised the Great Exhibition were in no way responsible for the exalted and extravagant expectations which were formed as to its effects on the history of the world and the elements of human nature. But there was a great deal too much of the dithyrambic about the style in which many writers and speakers thought fit to describe the Exhibition. With some of these all this was the result of genuine enthusiasm. In other instances the extravagance was indulged in by persons not habitually extravagant, but, on the contrary, very sober, methodical, and calculating, who by the very fact of their possessing eminently these qualities were led into a total misconception of the influence of such assemblages of men. These calm and wise persons assumed that because they themselves, if shown that a certain course of conduct was for their material and moral benefit, would instantly follow it and keep to it, it must therefore follow that all peoples and states were amenable to the same excellent principle of self-discipline. War is a foolish and improvident, not to say immoral and atrocious, way of trying to adjust our disputes, they argued; let peoples far divided in geographical situation be only brought together and induced to talk this over, and see how much more profitable and noble is the rivalry of peace in trade and commerce, and they will never think of the coarse and brutal arbitrament of battle any more. Not a few others, it must be owned, indulged in the high-flown glorification of the reign of peace to come

because the Exhibition was the special enterprise of the Prince Consort, and they had a natural aptitude for the production of courtly strains. But among all these classes of pæan-singers it did happen that a good deal of unmerited discredit was cast upon the results of the Great Exhibition; for the enterprise was held responsible for illusions it had of itself nothing to do with creating, and disappointments which were no consequence of any failure on its part. Even upon trade and production it is very easy to exaggerate the beneficent influences of an international exhibition. But that such enterprises have some beneficial influence is beyond doubt; and that they are interesting, instructive, well calculated to educate and refine the minds of nations, may be admitted by the least enthusiastic of men.

The first idea of the Exhibition was conceived by Prince Albert; and it was his energy and influence which succeeded in carrying the idea into practical execution. Probably no influence less great than that which his station gave to the Prince would have prevailed to carry to success so difficult an enterprise. There had been industrial exhibitions before on a small scale and of local limit; but if the idea of an exhibition in which all the nations of the world were to compete had occurred to other minds before, as it may well have done, it was merely as a vague thought, a day-dream, without any claim to a practical realisation. Prince Albert was President of the Society of Arts, and this position secured him a platform for the effective promulgation of his ideas. On June 30, 1849, he called a meeting of the Society of Arts at Buckingham Palace. He proposed that the Society should undertake the initiative in the promotion of an exhibition of the works of all nations. The main idea of Prince Albert was that the exhibition should be divided into four great sections —the first to contain raw materials and produce; the second machinery for ordinary industrial and productive purposes and mechanical inventions of the more ingenious kind; the third manufactured articles; and the fourth sculpture, models, and the illustrations of the plastic arts generally. The idea was at once taken up by the Society of Arts, and by their agency spread abroad. On October 17 in the same year a meeting of merchants and bankers was held in London to promote the success of the undertaking. In the first few days of 1850 a formal Commission was appointed 'for the promotion of the Exhibition of the Works of All Nations, to be holden in the year 1851.' Prince Albert was appointed President of the Commission. The enterprise was now fairly launched. A few days after a meeting was held in the Mansion House to raise funds in aid of the Exhibition, and ten thousand pounds was at once collected. This of course was but the beginning, and a guarantee fund of two hundred thousand pounds was very soon obtained.

On March 21 in the same year the Lord Mayor of London gave a banquet at the Mansion House to the chief magistrates of the cities, towns, and boroughs of the United Kingdom, for the purpose of inviting their co-operation in support of the undertaking. Prince Albert was present, and spoke. He had cultivated the art of speaking with much success, and had almost entirely overcome whatever difficulty stood in his way from his foreign birth and education. He never quite lost his foreign accent. No man coming to a new country at the age of manhood as Prince Albert did ever acquired the new tongue in such a manner as to lose all trace of a foreign origin; and to the end of his career Prince Albert spoke with an accent which, however carefully trained, still betrayed its early habitudes. But, except for this slight blemish, Prince Albert may be said to have acquired a perfect mastery of the English language; and he became a remarkably good public speaker. He had indeed nothing of the orator in his nature. It was but the extravagance of courtliness which called his polished and thoughtful speeches oratory. In the Prince's nature there was neither the passion nor the poetry that are essential to genuine eloquence; nor were the occasions on which he addressed the English people likely to stimulate a man to eloquence. But his style of speaking was clear, thoughtful, stately, and sometimes even noble. It exactly suited its purpose. It was that of a man who did not set up for an orator; and who, when he spoke, wished that his ideas rather than his words should impress his hearers. It is very much to be doubted whether the English public would be quite delighted to have a prince who was also a really great orator. Genuine eloquence would probably impress a great many respectable persons as a gift not exactly suited to a prince. There is even still a certain distrust of the artistic in the English mind as of a sort of thing which is very proper in professional writers and painters and speakers, but which would hardly become persons of the highest station. Prince Albert probably spoke just as well as he could have done with successful effect upon his English audiences. At the dinner in the Mansion House he spoke with great clearness and grace of the purposes of the Great Exhibition. It was, he said, to 'give the world a true test, a living picture, of the point of industrial development at which the whole of mankind has arrived, and a new starting-point from which all nations will be able to direct their further exertions.'

It must not be supposed, however, that the project of the Great Exhibition advanced wholly without opposition. Many persons were disposed to sneer at it; many were sceptical about its doing any good; not a few still regarded Prince Albert as a foreigner and a pedant, and were slow to believe that anything really practical was likely to be

developed under his impulse and protection. A very whimsical sort of opposition was raised in the House of Commons by a once famous eccentric, the late Colonel Sibthorp. Sibthorp was a man who might have been drawn by Smollett. His grotesque gestures, his overboiling energy, his uncouth appearance, his huge moustache, marked him out as an object of curiosity in any crowd. He was the subject of one of the most amusing pieces of impromptu parody ever thrown off by a public speaker—that in which O'Connell travestied Dryden's famous lines about the three poets in three distant ages born, and pictured three colonels in three different counties born, winding up with: 'The force of Nature could no farther go; to beard the one she shaved the other two.' One of the gallant Sibthorp's especial weaknesses was a distrust and detestation of all foreigners. Foreigners he lumped together as a race of beings whose chief characteristics were Popery and immorality. While three-fourths of the promoters of the Exhibition were dwelling with the strongest emphasis on the benefit it would bring by drawing into London the representatives of all nations, Colonel Sibthorp was denouncing this agglomeration of foreigners as the greatest curse that could fall upon England. He regarded foreigners much as Isaac of York, in 'Ivanhoe,' regards the Knight Templars. 'When,' asks Isaac in bitter remonstrance, 'did Templars breathe aught but cruelty to men and dishonour to women?' Colonel Sibthorp kept asking some such question with regard to foreigners in general and their expected concourse to the Exhibition. In language somewhat too energetic and broad for our more polite time, he warned the House of Commons and the country of the consequences to English morals which must come of the influx of a crowd of foreigners at a given season. 'Take care,' he exclaimed in the House of Commons, 'of your wives and daughters; take care of your property and your lives!' He declared that he prayed for some tremendous hailstorm or visitation of lightning to be sent from heaven expressly for the purpose of destroying in advance the building destined for the ill-omened Exhibition. When Free Trade had left nothing else needed to complete the ruin of the nation, the enemy of mankind, he declared, had inspired us with the idea of the Great Exhibition, so that the foreigners who had first robbed us of our trade might now be enabled to rob us of our honour.

The objections raised to the Exhibition were not by any means confined to Colonel Sibthorp or to his kind of argument. After some consideration the Royal Commissioners had fixed upon Hyde Park as the best site for the great building, and many energetic and some influential voices were raised in fierce outcry against what was called the profanation of the park. It was argued that the public use of Hyde Park would be destroyed

by the Exhibition: that the park would be utterly spoiled; that its beauty could never be restored. A petition was presented by Lord Campbell to the House of Lords against the occupation of any part of Hyde Park with the Exhibition building. Lord Brougham supported the petition with his characteristic impetuosity and vehemence. He denounced the Attorney-General with indignant eloquence because that official had declined to file an application to the Court of Chancery for an injunction to stay any proceeding with the proposed building in the park. He denounced the House of Lords itself for what he considered its servile deference to royalty in the matter of the Exhibition and its site. He declared that when he endeavoured to raise the question there he was received in dead silence; and he asserted that an effort to bring on a discussion in the House of Commons was received with a silence equally profound and servile. Such facts, he shouted, only showed more painfully 'that absolute prostration of the understanding which takes place even in the minds of the bravest when the word prince is mentioned in this country!' It is probably true enough that only the influence of a prince could have carried the scheme to success against the storms of opposition that began to blow at various periods and from different points. Undoubtedly a vast number, probably the great majority, of those who supported the enterprise in the beginning did so simply because it was the project of a prince. Their numbers and their money enabled it to be carried on, and secured it the test of the world's examination and approval. In that sense the very servility which accepts with delight whatever a prince proposes stood the Exhibition in good stead; a courtier may plead that if English people in general had been more independent and less given to admiration of princes, the excellent project devised by Prince Albert would never have had a fair trial. Many times during its progress the Prince himself trembled for the success of his scheme. Many a time he must have felt inclined to renounce it, or at least to regret that he had ever taken it up.

Absurd as the opposition to the scheme may now seem, it is certain that a great many sensible persons thought the moment singularly inopportune for the gathering of large crowds, and were satisfied that some inconvenient, if not dangerous, public demonstration must be provoked. The smouldering embers of Chartism, they said, were everywhere under society's feet. The crowds of foreigners whom Colonel Sibthorp so dreaded would, calmer people said, naturally include large numbers of the 'Reds' of all continental nations, who would be only too glad to coalesce with Chartism and discontent of all kinds, for the purpose of disturbing the peace of London. The agitation caused by the Papal aggression was still in full force and flame. By an odd coincidence the first column of the

Exhibition building had been set up in Hyde Park almost at the same moment with the issue of the Papal bull establishing a Roman Catholic hierarchy in England. These conditions looked gloomy for the project. 'The opponents of the Exhibition,' wrote the Prince himself, 'work with might and main to throw all the old women here into a panic and to drive myself crazy. The strangers, they give out, are certain to commence a thorough revolution here, to murder Victoria and myself, and to proclaim the Red Republic in England; the plague is certain to ensue from the confluence of such vast multitudes, and to swallow up those whom the increased price of everything has not already swept away. For all this I am to be responsible, and against all this I have to make efficient provision.' Most of the Continental sovereigns looked coldly on the undertaking. The King of Prussia took such alarm at the thought of the Red Republicans whom the Exhibition would draw together, that at first he positively prohibited his brother, then Prince of Prussia, now German Emperor, from attending the opening ceremonial; and though he afterwards withdrew the prohibition he remained full of doubts and fears as to the personal safety of any royal or princely personage found in Hyde Park on the opening day. The Duke of Cambridge, being appealed to on the subject, acknowledged himself also full of apprehensions. The objections to the site continued to grow up to a certain time. 'The Exhibition,' Prince Albert wrote once to Baron Stockmar, his friend and adviser, 'is now attacked furiously by the *Times*, and the House of Commons is going to drive us out of the Park. There is immense excitement on the subject. If we are driven out of the Park, the work is done for.' At one time, indeed, this result seemed highly probable; but public opinion gradually underwent a change, and the opposition to the site was defeated in the House of Commons by a large majority.

Even, however, when the question of the site had been disposed of, there remained immense difficulties in the way. The press was not on the whole very favourable to the project; *Punch*, in particular, was hardly ever weary of making fun of it. Such a project, while yet only in embryo, undoubtedly furnished many points on which satire could fasten; and nothing short of complete success could save it from falling under a mountain of ridicule. No half success would have rescued it. The ridicule was naturally provoked and aggravated to an unspeakable degree by the hyperbolical expectations and preposterous dithyrambics of some of the well-meaning but unwise and somewhat too obstreperously loyal supporters of the enterprise. To add to all this, as the time for the opening drew near, some of the foreign diplomatists in London began to sulk at the whole project. There were small points of objection made about the

position and functions of foreign ambassadors at the opening ceremonial, and what the Queen and Prince meant for politeness was in one instance at least near being twisted into cause of offence. Up to the last moment it was not quite certain whether an absurd diplomatic quarrel might not have been part of the inaugural ceremonies of the opening day.

The Prince did not despair, however, and the project went on. There was a great deal of difficulty in selecting a plan for the building. Huge structures of brickwork, looking like enormous railway sheds, costly and hideous at once, were proposed; it seemed almost certain that some one of them most be chosen. Happily, a sudden inspiration struck Mr. (afterwards Sir Joseph) Paxton, who was then in charge of the Duke of Devonshire's superb grounds at Chatsworth. Why not try glass and iron? he asked himself. Why not build a palace of glass and iron large enough to cover all the intended contents of the Exhibition, and which should be at once light, beautiful, and cheap? Mr. Paxton sketched out his plan hastily, and the idea was eagerly accepted by the Royal Commissioners. He made many improvements afterwards in his design; but the palace of glass and iron arose within the specified time on the green turf of Hyde Park. The idea so happily hit upon was serviceable in more ways than one to the success of the Exhibition. It made the building itself as much an object of curiosity and wonder as the collections under its crystal roof. Of the hundreds of thousands who came to the Exhibition a goodly proportion were drawn to Hyde Park rather by a wish to see Paxton's palace of glass than all the wonders of industrial and plastic art that it enclosed. Indeed, Lord Palmerston, writing to Lord Normanby on the day after the opening of the Exhibition, said: 'The building itself is far more worth seeing than anything in it, though many of its contents are worthy of admiration.' Perhaps the glass building was like the Exhibition project itself in one respect. It did not bring about the revolution which it was confidently expected to create. Glass and iron have not superseded brick and stone, any more than competitions of peaceful industry have banished arbitrament by war. But the building, like the Exhibition itself, fulfilled admirably its more modest and immediate purpose, and was in that way a complete success. The structure of glass is indeed in every mind inseparably associated with the event and the year.

The Queen herself has written a very interesting account of the success of the opening day. Her description is interesting as an expression of the feelings of the writer, the sense of profound relief and rapture, as well as for the sake of the picture it gives of the ceremonial itself. The enthusiasm of the wife over the complete success of the project on which her husband had set his heart and staked his name is simple and touching. If the im-

portance of the undertaking and the amount of fame it was to bring to its author may seem a little overdone, not many readers will complain of the womanly and wifely feeling which could not be denied such fervent expression. 'The great event,' wrote the Queen, 'has taken place—a complete and beautiful triumph—a glorious and touching sight, one which I shall ever be proud of for my beloved Albert and my country. . . . The park presented a wonderful spectacle—crowds streaming through it, carriages and troops passing, quite like the Coronation day, and for me the same anxiety—no, much greater anxiety, on account of my beloved Albert. The day was bright, and all bustle and excitement.. . . . The Green Park and Hyde Park were one densely crowded mass of human beings, in the highest good humour and most enthusiastic. I never saw Hyde Park look as it did—as far as the eye could reach. A little rain fell just as we started, but before we came near the Crystal Palace the sun shone and gleamed upon the gigantic edifice, upon which the flags of all nations were floating. . . . The glimpse of the transept through the iron gates, the waving palms, flowers, statues, myriads of people filling the galleries and seats around, with the flourish of trumpets as we entered, gave us a sensation which I can never forget, and I felt much moved. . . . The sight as we came to the middle was magical—so vast, so glorious, so touching—one felt, as so many did whom I have since spoken to, filled with devotion—more so than by any service I have ever heard. The tremendous cheers, the joy expressed in every face, the immensity of the building, the mixture of palms, flowers, trees, statues, fountains; the organ (with two hundred instruments and six hundred voices, which sounded like nothing), and my beloved husband the author of this peace festival, which united the industry of all nations of the earth—all this was moving indeed, and it was and is a day to live for ever. God bless my dearest Albert! God bless my dearest country, which has shown itself so great to-day! One felt so grateful to the great God, who seemed to pervade all and to bless all.'

The success of the opening day was indeed undoubted. There were nearly thirty thousand people gathered together within the building, and nearly three-quarters of a million of persons lined the way between the Exhibition and Buckingham Palace; and yet no accident whatever occurred, nor had the police any trouble imposed on them by the conduct of anybody in the crowd. 'It was impossible,' wrote Lord Palmerston, 'for the invited guests of a lady's drawing-room to have conducted themselves with more perfect propriety than did this sea of human beings.' It is needless to say that there were no hostile demonstrations by Red Republicans or malignant Chartists or infuriated Irish Catholics. The

one thing which especially struck foreign observers, and to which many eloquent pens and tongues bore witness, was the orderly conduct of the people. Nor did the subsequent history of the Exhibition in any way belie the promise of its opening day. It continued to attract delighted crowds to the last, and more than once held within its precincts at one moment nearly a hundred thousand persons, a concourse large enough to have made the population of a respectable Continental capital. In another way the Exhibition proved even more successful than was anticipated. There had been some difficulty in raising money in the first instance, and it was thought something of a patriotic risk when a few spirited citizens combined to secure the accomplishment of the undertaking by means of a guarantee fund. But the guarantee fund became in the end merely one of the forms and ceremonials of the Exhibition: for the undertaking not only covered its expenses, but left a huge sum of money in the hands of the Royal Commissioners. The Exhibition was closed by Prince Albert on October 15. That at least may be described as the closing day, for it was then that the awards of prizes were made known in presence of the Prince and a large concourse of people. The Exhibition itself had actually been closed to the general public on the eleventh of the month. It has been imitated again and again. It was followed by an exhibition in Dublin; an exhibition of the paintings and sculptures of all nations in Manchester; three great exhibitions in Paris; the International Exhibition in Kensington in 1862—the enterprise too of Prince Albert, although not destined to have his presence at its opening; an exhibition at Vienna, one in Philadelphia, and various others. Where all nations seem to have agreed to pay Prince Albert's enterprise the compliment of imitation, it seems superfluous to say that it was a success. Time has so toned down our expectations in regard to these enterprises that no occasion now arises for the feeling of disappointment which was long associated in the minds of once-sanguine persons with the Crystal Palace of Hyde Park. We look on such exhibitions now as useful agencies in the work of industrial development, and in promoting the intercourse of peoples, and thus co-operating with various other influences in the general business of civilisation. But the impressions produced by the Hyde Park Exhibition were unique. It was the first thing of the kind; the gathering of peoples it brought together was as new, odd, and interesting as the glass building in which the industry of the world was displayed. For the first time in their lives Londoners saw the ordinary aspect of London distinctly modified and changed by the incursion of foreigners who came to take part in or to look at our Exhibition. London seemed to be playing at holiday in a strange carnival sort of way during the time

the Exhibition was open. The Hyde Park enterprise bequeathed nothing very tangible or distinct to the world, except indeed the palace which, built out of its fabric, not its ruins, so gracefully ornaments one of the soft hills of Sydenham. But the memory of the Exhibition itself is very distinct with all who saw it. None of its followers was exactly like it, or could take its place in the recollection of those who were its contemporaries. In a year made memorable by many political events of the greatest importance, of disturbed and tempestuous politics abroad and at home, of the deaths of many illustrious men, and the failure of many splendid hopes, the Exhibition in Hyde Park still holds its place in memory—not for what it brought or accomplished, but simply for itself, its surroundings, and its house of glass.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### PALMERSTON.

The death of Sir Robert Peel had left Lord Palmerston the most prominent, if not actually the most influential, among the statesmen of England. Palmerston's was a strenuous self-asserting character. He loved, whenever he had an opportunity, to make a stroke, as he frequently put it himself, 'off his own bat.' He had given himself up to the study of foreign affairs as no minister of his time had done. He had a peculiar capacity for understanding foreign politics and people as well as foreign languages; and he had come somewhat to pique himself upon his knowledge. As Bacon said that he had taken all learning for his province, Palmerston seemed to have made up his mind that he had taken all European affairs for his province. His sympathies were markedly liberal. As opinions went then, they might have been considered among statesmen almost revolutionary; for the Conservative of our day is to the full as liberal as the average Liberal of 1848 and 1850. In all the popular movements going on throughout the Continent Palmerston's sympathies were generally with the peoples and against the government; while he had, on the other hand, a very strong contempt, which he took no pains to conceal, even for the very best class of the Continental demagogue. It was not, however, in his sympathies that Palmerston differed from most of his colleagues. He was not more liberal even in his views of foreign affairs than Lord John Russell; he was probably not so consistently and on principle a supporter of free and popular institutions. But Lord Palmerston's energetic, heedless temperament, his exuberant animal spirits,

and his profound confidence in himself and his opinions, made him much more liberal and spontaneous in his expressions of sympathy than a man of Russell's colder nature could well have been. Palmerston seized a conclusion at once, and hardly ever departed from it. He never seemed to care who knew what he thought on any subject. He had a contempt for men of more deliberate temper, and often spoke and wrote as if he thought a man slow in forming an opinion must needs be a dull man, not to say a fool. All opinions not his own he held in good-humoured scorn. In some of his letters we find him writing of men of the most undoubted genius and wisdom, whose views have since stood all the test of time and trial, as if they were mere blockheads for whom no practical man could feel the slightest respect. It would be almost superfluous to say, in describing a man of such a nature, that Lord Palmerston sometimes fancied he saw great wisdom and force of character in men for whom neither then nor since did the world in general show much regard. As with a man, so with a cause. Lord Palmerston was to all appearance capricious in his sympathies. Calmer and more earnest minds were sometimes offended at what seemed a lack of deep-seated principle in his mind and his policy, even when it happened that he and they were in accord as to the course that ought to be pursued. His levity often shocked them; his blunt, brusque ways of speaking and writing sometimes gave downright offence.

In his later years Lord Palmerston's manner in Parliament and out of it had greatly mellowed and softened and grown more genial. He retained all the good spirits and the ready, easy, marvellously telling humour: but he had grown more considerate of the feelings of opponents in debate, and he allowed his genuine kindness of heart a freer influence upon his mode of speech. He had grown to prefer on the whole his friend or even his honourable opponent to his joke. They who only remember Palmerston in his very later years in the House of Commons, and who can only recall to memory that bright racy humour which never offended, will perhaps find it hard to understand how many enemies he made for himself at an earlier period by the levity and flippancy of his manner. Many grave statesmen thought that the levity and flippancy were far less dangerous even when employed in irritating his adversaries in the House of Commons than when exercised in badgering foreign ministers and their governments and sovereigns. Lord Palmerston was unsparing in his lectures to foreign States. He was always admonishing them that they ought to lose no time in at once adopting the principles of government which prevailed in England. He not uncommonly put his admonitions in the tone of one who meant to say: 'If you don't take my advice, you will

be ruined, and your ruin will serve you right for being such fools.' While, therefore, he was a Conservative in home politics, and never even professed the slightest personal interest in any projects of political reform in England, he got the credit all over the Continent of being a supporter, promoter, and patron of all manner of revolutionary movements, and a disturber of the relations between subjects and their sovereigns.

Lord Palmerston was not inconsistent in thus being a Conservative at home and something like a revolutionary abroad. He was quite satisfied with the state of things in England. He was convinced that when a people had got a well-limited suffrage and a respectable House of Commons elected by open vote, a House of Lords, and a constitutional Sovereign, they had got all that in a political sense man has to hope for. He was not a far-seeing man, nor a man who much troubled himself about what a certain class of writers and thinkers are fond of calling 'problems of life.' It did not occur to him to think that, as a matter of absolute necessity, the very reforms we enjoy in one day are only putting us into a mental condition to aspire after and see the occasion for further reforms as the days go on. But he clearly saw that most Continental countries were governed on a system which was not only worn out and decaying, but which was the source of great practical and personal evils to their inhabitants. He desired, therefore, for every country a political system like that of Great Britain, and neither for Great Britain nor for any other country did he desire anything more. He was, accordingly, looked upon by Continental ministers as a patron of revolution, and by English Radicals as the steady enemy of political reform. Both were right from their own point of view. The familiar saying among Continental Conservatives was expressed in the well-known German lines, which affirm that, 'If the devil had a son, he must be surely Palmerston.' On the other hand, the English Radical party regarded him as the most formidable enemy they had. Mr. Cobden deliberately declared him to be the worst minister that had ever governed England. At a later period, when Lord Palmerston invited Cobden to take office under him, Cobden referred to what he had said of Palmerston, and gave this as a reason to show the impossibility of his serving such a chief. The good-natured statesman only smiled, and observed that another public man who had just joined his Administration had often said things as hard of him in other days. 'Yes,' answered Cobden, quietly, 'but I meant what I said.'

Palmerston, therefore, had many enemies among European statesmen. It is now certain that the Queen frequently winced under the expressions of ill-feeling which were brought to her ears as affecting England, and, as she supposed, herself, and which she believed to have been drawn on her

by the inconsiderate and impulsive conduct of Palmerston. The Prince Consort, on whose advice the Queen very naturally relied, was a man of singularly calm and earnest nature. He liked to form his opinions deliberately and slowly, and disliked expressing any opinion until his mind was well made up. Lord Palmerston, when Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was much in the habit of writing and answering despatches on the spur of the moment, and without consulting either the Queen or his colleagues. Palmerston complained of the long delays which took place on several occasions when, in matters of urgent importance, he waited to submit despatches to the Queen before sending them off. He was of opinion that during the memorable controversy on the Spanish marriages the interests of England were once in danger of being compromised by the delay thus forced upon him. He contended too that where the general policy of a State was clearly marked out and well known, it would have been idle to insist that a Foreign Secretary capable of performing the duties of his office should wait to submit for the inspection and approval of the Sovereign and his colleagues every scrap of paper he wrote on before it was allowed to leave England. If such precautions were needful, Lord Palmerston contended, it could only be because the person holding the office of Foreign Secretary was unfit for his post; and he ought, therefore to be dismissed, and some better qualified man put in his place. Of course there is some obvious justice in this view of the case. It would perhaps have been unreasonable to expect that, at a time when the business of the Foreign Office had suddenly swelled to unprecedented magnitude, the same rules and formalities could be kept up which had suited slower and less busy days. But the complaint made by the Queen was not that Palmerston failed to consult her on every detail and to submit every line relating to the organisation of the Foreign Office for her approval before he sent it off. The complaint was clear, and full of matter for very grave consideration. The Queen complained that on matters concerning the actual policy of the State, Palmerston was in the habit of acting on his own independent judgment and authority; that she found herself more than once thus pledged to a course of policy which she had not had an opportunity of considering, and would not have approved if she had had such an opportunity; and that she hardly ever found any question absolutely intact and uncompromised when it was submitted to her judgment. The complaint was justified in many cases. Lord Palmerston frequently acted in a manner which almost made it seem as if he were purposely ignoring the authority of the Sovereign. In part this came from the natural impatience of a quick man confident in his own knowledge of a subject, and chafing at any delay which he thought unnecessary and merely formal. But it is

not easy to avoid a suspicion that Lord Palmerston's rapidity of action sometimes had a different explanation. Two impressions seem to have had a place deeply down in the mind of the Foreign Secretary. He appears to have felt sure that, roughly speaking, the sympathies of the English people were with the Continental movements against the sovereigns, and that the sympathies of the English Court were with the sovereigns against the popular movements. In the first belief he was undoubtedly right. In the second he was probably right. It is not likely that a man of Prince Albert's peculiar turn of mind could have admitted much sympathy with revolution against constituted authority of any kind. Even his Liberalism, undoubtedly a deep and genuine conviction, did not lead him to make much allowance for any disturbing impulses. His orderly intellectual nature, with little of fire or passion in it, was prone to estimate everything by the manner in which it stood the test of logical argument. He could understand arguing against a bad system better than he could understand taking the risk of making things worse by resisting it. Some of the published memoranda or other writings of Prince Albert are full of a curious interest as showing the way in which a calm, intellectual and earnest man could approach some of the burning questions of the day with the belief apparently that the great antagonisms of systems and of opposing national forces could be argued into moderation and persuaded into compromise. In Prince Albert there were two tendencies counteracting each other. His natural sympathies were manifestly with the authority of thrones. His education taught him that thrones can only exist by virtue of their occupants recognising the fact that they do not exist of their own authority, and taking care that they do not become unsuited to the time. The influence of Prince Albert would therefore be something very different from the impulses and desires of Lord Palmerston. It is hardly to be doubted that Palmerston sometimes acted upon this conviction. He thought he understood better than others not only the tendencies of events in foreign politics, but also the tendencies of English public opinion with regard to them. He well knew that so long as he had public opinion with him, no influence could long prevail against him. His knowledge of English public opinion was something like an instinct. It could always be trusted. It had, indeed, no far reach. Lord Palmerston never could be relied upon for a judgment as to the possible changes of a generation or even a few years. But he was an almost infallible guide as to what a majority of the English people were likely to say if asked at the particular moment when any question was under dispute. Palmerston never really guided, but always followed, the English public, even in foreign affairs. He was, it seems almost needless to say, an

incomparably better judge of the direction English sentiment was likely to take than the most acute foreigner put in such a place as Prince Albert's could possibly hope to be. It may be assumed, then, that some at least of Lord Palmerston's actions were dictated by the conviction that he had the general force of that sentiment to sustain him in case his mode of conducting the business of the Foreign Office should ever be called into account.

A time came when it was called into account. The Queen and the Prince had long chafed under Lord Palmerston's cavalier way of doing business. So far back as 1849 her Majesty had felt obliged to draw the attention of the Foreign Secretary to the fact that his office was constitutionally under the control of the Prime Minister, and that the despatches to be submitted for her approval should, therefore, pass through the hands of Lord John Russell. Lord John Russell approved of this arrangement, only suggesting—and the suggestion is of some moment in considering the defence of his conduct afterwards made by Lord Palmerston—that every facility should be given for the transaction of business by the Queen's attending to the draft despatches as soon as possible after their arrival. The Queen accepted the suggestion good-humouredly, only pleading that she should 'not be pressed for an answer within a few minutes, as is done now sometimes.' One can see tolerably well what a part of the difficulty was even from these slight hints. Lord Palmerston was rapid in forming his judgments as in all his proceedings, and when once he had made up his mind was impatient of any delay which seemed to him superfluous. Prince Albert was slow, deliberate, reflective, and methodical. Lord Palmerston was always sure he was right in every judgment he formed, even if it were adopted on the spur of the moment; Prince Albert loved reconsideration, and was open to new argument and late conviction. However, the difficulty was got over in 1849. Lord Palmerston agreed to every suggestion, and for the time all seemed likely to go smoothly. It was only for the time. The Queen soon believed she had reason to complain that the new arrangement was not carried out. Things were going on, she thought, in just the old way. Lord Palmerston dealt as before with foreign courts according to what seemed best to him at the moment; and his Sovereign and his colleagues often only knew of some important despatch or instruction when the thing was done and could not be conveniently or becomingly undone. The Prince, at her Majesty's request, wrote to Lord John Russell, complaining strongly of the conduct of Lord Palmerston. The letter declared that Lord Palmerston had failed in his duty towards her, 'and not from oversight or negligence, but upon principle, and with astonishing pertinacity, against every effort of the Queen. Besides which,

Lord Palmerston does not scruple to let it appear in public as if the Sovereign's negligence in attending to the papers sent to her caused delay and annoyance.' Even before this it seems that the Queen had drawn up a memorandum to lay down in clear and severe language the exact rules by which the Foreign Secretary must be bound in his dealings with her. The memorandum was not used at that time, as it was thought that the remonstrances of the Sovereign and the Prime Minister alike could hardly fail to have some effect on the Foreign Secretary. This time, however, the Queen appears to have felt that she could no longer refrain; and accordingly the following important memorandum was addressed by her Majesty to the Prime Minister. It is well worth quoting in full, partly because it became a subject of much interest and controversy afterwards, and partly because of the tone of peculiar sternness, rare indeed from a sovereign to a minister in our times, in which its instructions are conveyed.

'Osborne, August 12, 1850.

'With reference to the conversation about Lord Palmerston which the Queen had with Lord John Russell the other day, and Lord Palmerston's disavowal that he ever intended any disrespect to her by the various neglects of which she has had so long and so often to complain, she thinks it right, in order to prevent any mistake for the future, to explain what it is she expects from the Foreign Secretary.

'She requires:

'First. That he will distinctly state what he proposes to do in a given case, in order that the Queen may know as distinctly to what she has given her royal sanction.

'Second. Having once given her sanction to a measure, that it be not arbitrarily altered or modified by the Minister; such an act she must consider as failure in sincerity towards the Crown, and justly to be visited by the exercise of her constitutional right of dismissing that Minister. She expects to be kept informed of what passes between him and the foreign ministers, before important decisions are taken based upon that intercourse; to receive the foreign despatches in good time, and to have the drafts for her approval sent to her in sufficient time to make herself acquainted with their contents before they must be sent off. The Queen thinks it best that Lord John Russell should show this letter to Lord Palmerston.'

The tone of the memorandum was severe, but there was nothing unreasonable in its stipulations. On the contrary, it simply prescribed what everyone might have supposed to be the elementary conditions on

which the duties of a sovereign and a foreign minister can alone be satisfactorily carried on. Custom as well as obvious convenience demanded such conditions. The Duke of Wellington declared that when he was Prime Minister no despatch left the Foreign Office without his seeing it. No sovereign, one would think, could consent to the responsibility of rule on any other terms. We have perhaps got into the habit of thinking, or at least of saying, that the sovereign of a constitutional country only rules through the ministers. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that the sovereign has no constitutional functions whatever provided by our system of government, and that the sole duty of a monarch is to make a figure in certain state pageantry. It has sometimes been said that the sovereign in a country like England is only the signet ring of the nation. If this were true, it might be asked with unanswerable force why a veritable signet ring costing a few pounds, and never requiring to be renewed, would not serve all purposes quite as well and save expense. But the position of the sovereign is not one of meaningless inactivity. The sovereign has a very distinct and practical office to fulfil in a constitutional country. The monarch in England is the chief magistrate of the State, specially raised above party and passion and change in order to be able to look with a clearer eye to all that concerns the interests of the nation. Our constitutional system grows and develops itself year after year as our requirements and conditions change; and the position of the sovereign, like everything else, has undergone some modification. It is settled now beyond dispute that the sovereign is not to dismiss ministers, or a minister, simply from personal inclination or conviction, as until a very recent day it was the right and the habit of English monarchs to do. The sovereign now retains, in virtue of usage having almost the force of constitutional law, the ministers of whom the House of Commons approves. But the Crown still has the right, in case of extreme need, of dismissing any minister who actually fails to do his duty. The sovereign is always supposed to understand the business of the State, to consider its affairs, and to offer an opinion and enforce it by argument on any question submitted by the ministers. When the ministers find that they cannot allow their judgment to bend to that of the sovereign, then indeed the sovereign gives way or the ministers resign. In all ordinary cases the sovereign gives way. But it was never intended by the English Constitution that the ministers and the country were not to have the benefit of the advice and the judgment of a magistrate who is purposely placed above all the excitements and temptations of party, its triumphs and its reverses, and who is assumed therefore to have no other motive than the good of the State in offering an advice. The sovereign would grossly fail in public duty, and would

be practically disappointing the confidence of the nation, who consented to act simply as the puppet of the minister, and to sign mechanically and without question every document he laid on the table.

In the principles which she laid down therefore, the Queen was strictly right. But the memorandum was none the less a severe and a galling rebuke for the Foreign Secretary. We can imagine with what emotions Lord Palmerston must have received it. He was a proud, self-confident man; and it came on him just in the moment of his greatest triumph. Never before, never since, did Lord Palmerston win so signal and so splendid a victory as that which he had extorted by the sheer force of his eloquence and his genius from a reluctant House of Commons in the Don Pacifico debate. Never probably in our Parliamentary history did a man of years so advanced accomplish such a feat of eloquence, argument, and persuasion as he had achieved. He stood up before the world the foremost English statesman of the day. It is easy to imagine how deeply he must have felt the rebuke conveyed in the memorandum of the Queen. We know as a matter of fact, from what he himself afterwards said, that he did feel it bitterly. But he kept down his feelings. Whether he was right or wrong in the matter of dispute, he undoubtedly showed admirable self-control and good temper in his manner of receiving the reprimand. He wrote a friendly and good-humoured letter to Lord John Russell, saying, 'I have taken a copy of this memorandum of the Queen, and will not fail to attend to the directions which it contains.' The letter then gave a few lines of explanation about the manner in which delays had arisen in the sending of despatches to the Queen, but promising to return to the old practice, and expressing a hope that if the return required an additional clerk or two, the Treasury would be liberal in allowing him that assistance. Nothing could be more easy and pleasant. It might have seemed the ease of absolute carelessness. But it was nothing of the kind. Lord Palmerston had acted deliberately and with a purpose. He afterwards explained why he had not answered the rebuke by resigning his office. 'The paper,' he said, 'was written in anger by a lady as well as by a sovereign, and the difference between a lady and a man could not be forgotten even in the case of the occupant of the throne.' He had 'no reason to suppose that this memorandum would ever be seen by or be known to anybody but the Queen, John Russell, and myself.' Again, 'I had lately been the object of violent political attack, and had gained a great and signal victory in the House of Commons and in public opinion; to have resigned then would have been to have given the fruits of victory to antagonists whom I had defeated, and to have abandoned my political supporters at the very moment when by their means I had triumphed.' But beyond all that, Lord Palmer-

ston said that by suddenly resigning 'I should have been bringing for decision at the bar of public opinion a personal quarrel between myself and my Sovereign—a step which no subject ought to take if he can possibly avoid it; for the result of such a course must be either fatal to him or injurious to the country. If he should prove to be in the wrong, he would be irretrievably condemned; if the Sovereign should be proved to be in the wrong, the monarchy would suffer.'

It is impossible not to feel a high respect for the manner in which, having come to this determination, Lord Palmerston at once acted upon it. As he had resolved not to resent the rebuke, he would not allow any gleam of feeling to creep into his letter which could show that he felt any resentment. Few men could have avoided the temptation to throw into a reply on such an occasion something of the tone of the injured, the unappreciated, the martyr, the wronged one who endures much and will not complain. Lord Palmerston felt instinctively the bad taste and unwisdom of such a style of reply. He took his rebuke in the most perfect good humour. His letter must have surprised Lord John Russell. Macaulay observes that Warren Hastings, confident that he knew best and was acting rightly, endured the rebukes of the East India Company with a patience which was sometimes mistaken for the patience of stupidity. It is not unlikely that when the Prime Minister received Lord Palmerston's reply he may have mistaken its patience for the patience of downright levity and indifference.

Lord Palmerston went a step farther in the way of conciliation. He asked for an interview with Prince Albert, and he explained to the Prince, in the most emphatic and indignant terms, that the accusation against him of being purposely wanting in respect to the Sovereign was absolutely unfounded. 'Had it been deserved, he ought to be no longer tolerated in society.' But he does not seem in the course of the interview to have done much more than argue the point as to the propriety and convenience of the system he had lately been adopting in the business of the Foreign Office.

So for the hour the matter dropped. Other events interfered; there were many important questions of domestic policy to be attended to; and for some time Lord Palmerston's policy and his way of conducting the business of the Foreign Office did not invite any particular attention. But the old question was destined to come up again in more serious form than before.

The failure of the Hungarian rebellion, through the intervention of Russia, called up a wide and deep feeling of regret and indignation in this country. The English people had very generally sympathised with the

cause of the Hungarians and rejoiced in the victories which up to a certain point the arms of the insurgents had won. When the Hungarians were put down at last, not by the strength of Austria but by the intervention of Russia, the anger of Englishmen in general found loud-spoken expression. Louis Kossuth, who had been Dictator of Hungary during the greater part of the insurrection, and who represented, in the English mind at least, the cause of Hungary and her national independence, came to England. He was about to take up his residence, as he then intended, in the United States, and on his way thither he visited England. He had applied for permission to pass through French territory, and had been refused the favour. The refusal only gave one additional reason to the English public for welcoming him with especial cordiality. He was accordingly received at Southampton, in Birmingham, in London, with an enthusiasm such as no foreigner except Garibaldi alone has ever drawn in our time from the English people. There was much in Kossuth himself as well as in his cause to attract the enthusiasm of popular assemblages. He had a strikingly handsome face and a stately presence. He was picturesque and perhaps even theatric in his dress and his bearing. He looked like a picture; all his attitudes and gestures seemed as if they were meant to be reproduced by a painter. He was undoubtedly one of the most eloquent men who ever addressed an English popular audience. In one of his imprisonments Kossuth had studied the English language chiefly from the pages of Shakespeare. He had mastered our tongue as few foreigners have ever been able to do; but what he had mastered was not the common colloquial English of the streets and the drawing-rooms. The English he spoke was the noblest in its style from which a student could supply his eloquence: Kossuth spoke the English of Shakespeare. He could address a public meeting for an hour or more with a fluency not inferior seemingly to that of Gladstone, with a measured dignity and well-restrained force that were not unworthy of Bright; and in curiously expressive, stately, powerful, pathetic English which sounded as if it belonged to a higher time and to loftier interests than ours. Viewed as a mere performance the achievement of Kossuth was unique. It may well be imagined what the effect was on a popular audience when such eloquence was poured forth in glowing eulogy of a cause with which they sympathised, and in denunciation of enemies and principles they detested. It was impossible not to be impressed by the force of some of the striking and dramatic passages in Kossuth's fervid, half-oriental orations. He stretched out his right hand and declared that 'the time was when I held the destinies of the House of Hapsburg in the hollow of that hand!' He apostrophised those who fought and fell in the rank and file of Hungary's

champions as 'unnamed demi-gods.' He prefaced a denunciation of the Papal policy by an impassioned lament over the brief hopes that the Pope was about to head the Liberal movement in Italy, and reminded his hearers that 'there was a time when the name of Pio Nono, coupled with that of Louis Kossuth, was thundered in *vivas* along the sunny shores of the Adriatic.' Every appeal was vivid and dramatic; every allusion told. Throughout the whole there ran the thread of one distinct principle of international policy to which Kossuth endeavoured to obtain the assent of the English people. This was the principle that if one State intervenes in the domestic affairs of another for the purpose of putting down revolution, it then becomes the right, and may even be the duty, of any third State to throw in the weight of her sword against the unjustifiable intervention. As a principle this is nothing more than some of the ablest and most thoughtful Englishmen had advocated before and have advocated since. But in Kossuth's mind and in the understanding of those who heard him, it meant that England ought to declare war against Russia or Austria, or both; the former for having intervened between the Emperor of Austria and the Hungarians, and the latter for having invited and profited by the intervention.

The presence of Kossuth and the reception he got excited a wild anger and alarm among Austrian statesmen. The Austrian minister was all sensitiveness and remonstrance. The relations between this country and Austria seemed to become every day more and more strained. Lord Palmerston regarded the anger and the fears of Austria with a contempt which he took no pains to conceal. Before the Hungarian exile had reached this country, while he was still under the protection of the Sultan of Turkey, and Austria was in wild alarm lest he should be set at liberty and should come to England, Lord Palmerston wrote to a British diplomatist saying, 'What a childish, silly fear this is of Kossuth! What great harm could he do to Austria while in France or England? He would be the hero of half a dozen dinners in England at which would be made speeches not more violent than those which have been made on platforms here within the last four months, and he would soon sink into comparative obscurity; while, on the other hand, so long as he is a State *détenu* in Turkey he is a martyr and the object of never-ceasing interest.' Lord Palmerston understood thoroughly the temper of his countrymen in general. The English public never had any serious notion of going to war with Austria in obedience to Kossuth's appeal. They sympathised generally with Kossuth's cause, or with the cause which they understood him to represent; they were taken with his picturesque appearance and his really wonderful eloquence; they wanted a new hero, and Kossuth

seemed positively cut out to supply the want. The enthusiasm cooled down after a while, as was indeed inevitable. The time was not far off when Kossuth was to make vain appeals to almost empty halls, and when the eloquence that once could cram the largest buildings with excited admirers was to call aloud to solitude. There came a time when Kossuth lived in England forgotten and unnoticed; when his passing away from England was unobserved as his presence there had long been. There seems, one can hardly help saying, something cruel in this way of suddenly taking up the representative of some foreign cause, the spokesman of some 'mission'; and then, when he has been filled with vain hopes, letting him drop down to disappointment and neglect. It was not perhaps the fault of the English people if Kossuth mistook, as many another man in like circumstances has done, the meaning of English popular sympathy. The English crowds who applauded Kossuth at first meant nothing more than general sympathy with any hero of Continental revolution, and personal admiration for the eloquence of the man who addressed them. But Kossuth did not thus accept the homage paid to him. No foreigner could have understood it in his place. Lord Palmerston understood it thoroughly, and knew what it meant, and how long it would last.

The time, however, had not yet come when the justice of Lord Palmerston's words was to be established. Kossuth was the hero of the hour, the comet of the season. The Austrian statesmen were going on as if every word spoken at a Kossuth meeting were a declaration of war against Austria. Lord Palmerston was disposed to chuckle over the anger thus displayed. 'Kossuth's reception,' he wrote to his brother, 'must have been gall and wormwood to the Austrians and to the absolutists generally.' Some of Lord Palmerston's colleagues, however, became greatly alarmed when it was reported that the Foreign Minister was about to receive a visit from Kossuth in person to thank him for the sympathy and protection which England had accorded to the Hungarian refugees while they were still in Turkey, and without which it is only too likely that they would have been handed over to Austria or Russia. It was thought that for the Foreign Secretary to receive a formal visit of thanks from Kossuth would be regarded by Austria as a recognition by England of the justice of Kossuth's cause and an expression of censure against Austria. If Kossuth were received by Lord Palmerston, the Austrian ambassador, it was confidently reported, would leave England. Lord John Russell took alarm, and called a meeting of the Cabinet to consider the momentous question. Lord Palmerston reluctantly consented to appease the alarms of his colleagues by promising to avoid an interview with Kossuth.

It does not seem to us that there was much dignity in the course taken

by the Cabinet. Lord Palmerston actually used, and very properly used, all the influence England could command to protect the Hungarian refugees in Turkey. He had intimated very distinctly, and with the full approval of England, that he would use still stronger measures if necessary to protect at once the Sultan and the refugees. It seems to us that, having done this openly, and compelled Russia and Austria to bend to his urgency, there could be little harm in his receiving a visit from one of the men whom he had thus protected. Austria's sensibilities must have been of a peculiar nature indeed if they could bear Lord Palmerston's very distinct and energetic intervention between her and her intended victim, but could not bear to hear that the rescued victim had paid Lord Palmerston a formal visit of gratitude. At all events, it does not seem as if an English minister was bound to go greatly out of his way to conciliate such very eccentric and morbid sensibilities. We owe to a foreign State with which we are on friendly terms a strict and honourable neutrality. Our ministers are bound by courtesy, prudence, and good sense not to obtrude any expression of their opinion touching the internal dissensions of a foreign State on the representatives of that State or the public. But they are not by any means bound to treat the enemies of every foreign State as our enemies. They are not expected to conciliate the friendship of Austria, for example, by declaring that anyone who is disliked by the Emperor of Austria shall never be admitted to speech of them. If Kossuth had come as the professed representative of an established government, and had sought an official interview with Lord Palmerston in that capacity, then indeed it would have been proper for the English Foreign Secretary to refuse to receive him. Our ministers, with perfect propriety, refused to receive Mr. Mason and Mr. Slidell, the emissaries of the Southern Confederation, as official representatives of any State. But it is absurd to suppose that when the civil war was over in America an English statesman in office would be bound to decline receiving a visit from Mr. Jefferson Davis. We know, in fact, that the ex-King of Naples, the ex-King of Hanover, Don Carlos, and the royal representatives of various lost causes, are constantly received by English ministers and by the Queen of England, and no representatives of any of the established governments would think of offering a remonstrance. If the Emperor of Austria was likely to be offended by Lord Palmerston's receiving a visit from Kossuth, the only course for an English minister, as it seems to us, was to leave him to be offended, and to recover from his anger whenever he chose to allow common sense to resume possession of his mind. The Queen of England might as well have taken offence at the action of the American Government, who actually gave, not merely private receptions, but public appointments, to Irish refugees after the outbreak of 1848.

Lord Palmerston, however, gave way, and did not receive the visit from Kossuth. The hoped-for result, that of sparing the sensibilities of the Austrian Government, was not attained. In fact, things turned out a great deal worse than they might have done if the interview between Lord Palmerston and Kossuth had been quietly allowed to come off. Meetings were held to express sympathy with Kossuth, and addresses were voted to Lord Palmerston thanking him for the influence he had exerted in preventing the surrender of Kossuth to Austria. Lord Palmerston consented to receive these addresses from the hands of deputations at the Foreign Office. The deputations represented certain metropolitan parishes, and were the exponents of markedly Radical opinions. Some of the addresses contained strong language with reference to the Austrian Government and the Austrian Sovereign. Lord Palmerston observed in his reply that there were expressions contained in the addresses with which he could hardly be expected to concur; but he spoke in a manner which conveyed the idea that his sympathies generally were with the cause which the deputations had adopted. This was the speech containing a phrase which was identified with Palmerston's name, and held to be specially characteristic of his way of speaking, and indeed of thinking, for many years after,—in fact, to the close of his career. The noble lord told the deputation that the past crisis was one which required on the part of the British Government much generalship and judgment; and that 'a good deal of judicious bottle-holding was obliged to be brought into play.' The phrase, 'bottle-holding,' borrowed from the prize ring, offended a good many persons who thought the past crisis far too grave, and the issues it involved too stern, to be properly described in language of such levity. But the general public were amused and delighted by the words, and the judicious bottle-holder became more of a popular favourite than ever. Some of the published reports put this a good deal more strongly than Lord Palmerston did, or at least than he intended to do; and he always insisted that he said no more to the deputations than he had often said in the House of Commons; and that he had expressly declared he could not concur in some of the expressions contained in the addresses. Still, the whole proceeding considerably alarmed some of Lord Palmerston's colleagues, and was regarded with distinct displeasure by the Queen and Prince Albert. The Queen specially requested that the matter should be brought before a Cabinet Council. Lord John Russell accordingly laid the whole question before his colleagues, and the general opinion seemed to be that Lord Palmerston had acted with want of caution. No formal resolution was adopted. It was thought that the general expression of opinion from his colleagues and the known displea-

sure of the Queen would be enough to impress the necessity for greater prudence on the mind of the Foreign Secretary. Lord John Russell, in communicating with her Majesty as to the proceedings of the Cabinet Council, expressed a hope that 'it will have its effect upon Lord Palmerston, to whom Lord John Russell has written urging the necessity of a guarded conduct in the present very critical condition of Europe.' This letter was not written when startling evidence was on its way to show that the irrepressible Foreign Secretary had been making a stroke off his own bat again; and a stroke this time of capital importance in the general game of European politics. The possible indiscretion of Lord Palmerston's dealings with a deputation or two from Finsbury and Islington became a matter of little interest when the country was called upon to consider the propriety of the Foreign Secretary's dealings with the new ruler of a new state system, with the author of the *coup d'état*.

The news of the *coup d'état* took England by surprise. A shock went through the whole country. Never probably was public opinion more unanimous, for the hour at least, than in condemnation of the stroke of policy ventured on by Louis Napoleon, and the savage manner in which it was carried to success. After a while no doubt a considerable portion of the English public came to look more leniently on what had been done. Many soon grew accustomed to the story of the massacres along the Boulevards of Paris and lost all sense of their horror. Some disposed of the whole affair after the satisfactory principle so commonly adopted by English people in judging of foreign affairs, and assumed that the system introduced by Louis Napoleon was a very good sort of thing—for the French. After a while a certain admiration, not to say adulation, of Louis Napoleon, began to be a kind of faith with many Englishmen, and the *coup d'état* was condoned and even approved by them. But there can be no doubt that when the story first came to be told in England, the almost universal voice of opinion condemned it as strongly as nearly all men of genuine enlightenment and feeling condemned it then and since. The Queen was particularly anxious that nothing should be said by the British ambassador to commit us to any approval of what had been done. On December 4 the Queen wrote to Lord John Russell from Osborne, expressing her desire that Lord Normanby, our ambassador at Paris, should be instructed to remain entirely passive and say no word that might be misconstrued into approval of the action of the Prince President. The Cabinet met that same day and decided that it was expedient to follow most closely her Majesty's instructions. But they decided also, and very properly, that there was no reason for Lord Normanby suspending his diplomatic functions. Lord Normanby had in fact applied for instructions on this point. Next

day Lord Palmerston, as Foreign Secretary, wrote to Lord Normanby, informing him that he was to make no change in his diplomatic relations with the French Government. Lord Normanby's reply to this despatch created a startling sensation. Our ambassador wrote to say that when he called on the French Minister for Foreign Affairs to inform him that he had been instructed by her Majesty's Government not to make any change in his relations with the French Government, the Minister, M. Turgot, told him that he had heard two days before from Count Walewski, the French Ambassador in London, that Lord Palmerston had expressed to him his entire approval of what Louis Napoleon had done, and his conviction that the Prince President could not have acted otherwise. It would not be easy to exaggerate the sensation produced among Lord Palmerston's colleagues by this astounding piece of news. The Queen wrote at once to Lord John Russell, asking him if he knew anything about the approval which 'the French Government pretend to have received'; declaring that she could not 'believe in the truth of the assertion, as such an approval given by Lord Palmerston would have been in complete contradiction to the line of strict neutrality and passiveness which the Queen had expressed her desire to see followed with regard to the late convulsions at Paris.' Lord John Russell replied that he had already written to Lord Palmerston, 'saying that he presumed there was no truth in the report.' The reply of Lord Palmerston was delayed for what Lord John Russell thought an unreasonable length of time at such a crisis; but when it came it left no doubt that Lord Palmerston had expressed to Count Walewski his approval of the *coup d'état*. Lord Palmerston observed indeed that Walewski had probably given to M. Turgot a somewhat highly coloured report of what he had said, and that the report had lost nothing in passing from M. Turgot to Lord Normanby; but the substance of the letter was a full admission that Lord Palmerston approved of what had been done, and had expressed his approval to Count Walewski. The letters of explanation which the Foreign Minister wrote on the subject, whether to Lord Normanby or to Lord John Russell, were elaborate justifications of the *coup d'état*; they were in fact exactly such arguments as a minister of Louis Napoleon might with great propriety address to a foreign Court. They were full of an undisguised and characteristic contempt for anyone who could think otherwise on the subject than as Lord Palmerston thought. In replying to Lord John Russell the contempt was expressed in a quiet sneer; in the letters to Lord Normanby it was obtrusively and offensively put forward. Lord John Russell in vain endeavoured to fasten Palmerston's attention on the fact that the question was not whether the action of Louis Napoleon was historically justifiable, but whether the conduct of

the English Foreign Minister in expressing the approval of it without the knowledge and against the judgment of the Queen and his colleagues was politically justifiable. Lord Palmerston simply returned to his defence of Louis Napoleon and his assertion that the Prince President was only anticipating the intrigues of the Orleans family and the plans of the Assembly. Lord Palmerston indeed gave a very minute account of a plot among the Orleans princes for a military rising against Louis Napoleon. No evidence of the existence of any such plot has ever been discovered. Louis Napoleon never pleaded the existence of such a plot in his own justification; it is now, we believe, universally admitted that Lord Palmerston was for once the victim of a mere *canard*. But even if there had been an Orleanist plot, or twenty Orleanist plots, it never has been part of the duty or the policy of an English Government to express approval of anything and everything that a foreign ruler may do to anticipate or put down a plot against him. The measures may be unjustifiable in their principle or in their severity; the plot may be of insignificant importance, utterly inadequate to excuse any extraordinary measures. The English Government is not in ordinary cases called upon to express any opinion whatever. It had in this case deliberately decided that all expression of opinion should be scrupulously avoided, lest by any chance the French Government should be led to believe that England approved of what had been done.

Lord Palmerston endeavoured to draw a distinction between the expressions of a Foreign Secretary in conversation with an ambassador and a formal declaration of opinion. But it is clear that the French ambassador did not understand Lord Palmerston to be merely indulging in the irresponsible gossip of private life, and that Lord Palmerston never said a word to impress him with the belief that their conversation had that colourless and unmeaning character. In any case it was surely a piece of singular indiscretion on the part of a Foreign Minister to give to the French ambassador, even in private conversation, an unqualified opinion in favour of a stroke of policy of which the British Government as a whole, and indeed with the one exception of Lord Palmerston, entirely disapproved. To give such an opinion without qualification or explanation was to mislead the French ambassador in the grossest manner and to send him away, as in fact he was sent, under the impression that the conduct of his chief had the approval of the Sovereign and Government of England. Let it be remembered further that the Foreign Secretary who did this had been again and again rebuked for acting on his own responsibility, for saying and doing things which pledged, or seemed to pledge, the responsibility of the Government without any authority, that a formal threat of dismissal actually hung over his head in the event of his repeating such

indiscretions; and we shall be better able to form some idea of the sensation which was created in England by the revelation of Lord Palmerston's conduct. Many of his colleagues had cordially sympathised with his views on the occasion of former indiscretions; and even while admitting that he had been indiscreet, yet acknowledged to themselves that their opinion on the broad question involved was not different from his. But even these drew back from any approval of his conduct in regard to the *coup d'état*. The almost universal judgment was that he had gone surprisingly wrong. Not a few, finding it impossible to account otherwise for such a proceeding, came to the conclusion that he must have been determined somehow to bring about a rupture with his colleagues of the Cabinet, and had chosen this high-handed assertion of his will as the best means of flinging his defiance in their teeth.

Lord John Russell made up his mind. He came to the conclusion that he could no longer go on with Lord Palmerston as a colleague in the Foreign Office, and he signified his decision to Lord Palmerston himself. 'While I concur,' thus Lord John Russell wrote, 'in the foreign policy of which you have been the adviser, and much as I admire the energy and ability with which it has been carried into effect, I cannot but observe that misunderstandings perpetually renewed, violations of prudence and decorum too frequently repeated, have marred the effects which ought to have followed from a sound policy and able administration. I am therefore must reluctantly compelled to come to the conclusion that the conduct of foreign affairs can no longer be left in your hands with advantage to the country.' Rather unfortunately, Lord John Russell endeavoured to soften the blow by offering, if Lord Palmerston should be willing, to recommend him to the Queen to fill the office of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. This was a proposal which we agree with Mr. Evelyn Ashley, Lord Palmerston's biographer, in regarding as almost comical in its character. Lord Palmerston's whole soul was in foreign affairs. He had never affected any particular interest in Irish business. He cared little even for the home politics of England; it was out of the question to suppose that he would consent to bury himself in the Viceregal Court of Dublin and occupy his diplomatic talents in composing disputes for precedence between Protestant deans and Catholic bishops, and in doling out the due proportion of invitations to the various ranks of aspiring traders and shopkeepers and their wives. Lord Palmerston declined the offer with open contempt, and indeed it can hardly be supposed for a moment that Lord John Russell expected he would have seriously entertained it. The quarrel was complete; Lord Palmerston ceased for the time to be Foreign Secretary, and his place was taken by Lord Granville.

Seldom has a greater sensation been produced by the removal of a minister. The effect which was created all over Europe was probably just what Lord Palmerston himself would have desired; the belief prevailed everywhere that he had been sacrificed to the monarchical and reactionary influences all over the Continent. The statesmen of Europe were under the impression that Lord Palmerston was put out of office as an evidence that England was about to withdraw from her former attitude of sympathy with the popular movements of the Continent. Lord Palmerston himself fell under a delusion, which seems marvellous in a man possessed of his clear, strong common sense. He conceived that he had been sacrificed to reactionary intrigue. He wrote to his brother to say that the real ground for his dismissal was a 'weak truckling to the hostile intrigues of the Orleans family, Austria, Russia, Saxony, and Bavaria, and in some degree of the present Prussian Government.' 'All these parties,' he said, 'found their respective views and systems of policy thwarted by the course pursued by the British Government, and they thought that if they could remove the minister they would change the policy. They had for a long time past effectually poisoned the mind of the Queen and Prince against me, and John Russell giving way rather encouraged than discountenanced the desire of the Queen to remove me from the Foreign Office.' So strongly did the idea prevail that an intrigue of foreign diplomatists had overthrown Palmerston, that the Russian ambassador, Baron Brunnow, took the very ill-advised step of addressing to Lord John Russell a disclaimer of any participation in such a proceeding. The Queen made a proper comment on the letter of Baron Brunnow by describing it as 'very presuming,' inasmuch as it insinuated the possibility 'of changes of governments in this country taking place at the instigation of foreign ministers.' Lord Palmerston was of course entirely mistaken in supposing that any foreign interference had contributed to his removal from the Foreign Office. The only wonder is how a man so experienced as he could have convinced himself of such a thing; at least, it would be a wonder if one did not know that the most experienced author or artist can always persuade himself that a disparaging critique is the result of personal and malignant hostility. But that the feeling of the Queen and the Prince had long been against him can hardly admit of dispute. Prince Albert seems not to have taken any pains to conceal his dislike and distrust of Palmerston. Nearly two years before, when the French ambassador was recalled for a time, the Prince wrote to Lord John Russell to say that both the Queen and himself were exceedingly sorry to hear of the recall; adding, 'We are not surprised, however, that Lord Palmerston's mode of doing business should not be borne by the

susceptible French Government with the same good humour and forbearance as by his colleagues.' At the moment when Lord John Russell resolved on getting rid of Lord Palmerston, Prince Albert wrote to him to say that 'the sudden termination of your difference with Lord Palmerston has taken us much by surprise, as we were wont to see such differences terminate in his carrying his points, and leaving the defence of them to his colleagues, and the discredit to the Queen.' It is clear from this letter alone that the Court was set against Lord Palmerston at that time. The Court was sometimes right where Palmerston was wrong; but the fact that he then knew himself to be in antagonism to the Court is of importance both in judging of his career and in estimating the relative strength of forces in the politics of England.

Lord Palmerston then was dismissed. The meeting of Parliament took place on the 3rd of February following, 1852. It would be superfluous to say that the keenest anxiety was felt to know the full reasons of the sudden dismissal. To quote the words used by Mr. Roebuck, 'The most marked person in the Administration, he around whom all the party battles of the Administration had been fought, whose political existence had been made the political existence of the Government itself, the person on whose being in office the Government rested their existence as a government, was dismissed; their right hand was cut off, their most powerful arm was taken away, and at the critical time when it was most needed.' The House of Commons was not long left to wait for an explanation. Lord John Russell made a long speech, in which he went into the whole history of the differences between Lord Palmerston and his colleagues; and, what was more surprising to the House, into a history of the late Foreign Secretary's differences with his Sovereign and the threat of dismissal which had so long been hanging over his head. The Prime Minister read to the House the Queen's memorandum which we have already quoted. Lord John Russell's speech was a great success. Lord Palmerston's was, even in the estimation of his closest friends, a failure. Far different, indeed, was the effect it produced from the almost magical influence of that wonderful speech on the 'Don Pacifico' question, which had compelled even unconvinced opponents to genuine admiration. Palmerston seemed to have practically no defence. He only went over again the points put by him in the correspondence already noticed; contended that on the whole he had judged rightly of the French crisis, and that he could not help forming an opinion on it, and so forth. Of the Queen's memorandum he said nothing. He did not even attempt to explain how it came about that, having received so distinct and severe an injunction, he had ventured deliberately to disregard it in a matter of the

greatest national importance. Some of his admirers were of opinion then and long after that the reading of the memorandum must have come on him by surprise; that Lord John Russell must have sprung a mine upon him; and that Palmerston was taken unfairly and at a disadvantage. But it is certain that Lord John Russell gave notice to his late colleague of his intention to read the memorandum of the Queen. Besides, Lord Palmerston was one of the most ready and self-possessed speakers that ever addressed the House of Commons. During the very reading of the memorandum he could have found time to arrange his ideas, and to make out some show of a case for himself. The truth, we believe, is that Lord Palmerston deliberately declined to make any reply to that part of Lord John Russell's speech which disclosed the letter from the Queen. He made up his mind that a dispute between a sovereign and a subject would be unbecoming of both; and he passed over the memorandum in deliberate silence. He doubtless felt convinced that, even though such indiscretion involved him for the moment in seeming defeat, it would in the long run reckon to his credit and his advantage. Lord Dalling, better known as Sir Henry Bulwer, was present during the debate, and formed an opinion of Palmerston's conduct which seems in every way correct and far-seeing. 'I must say,' Lord Dalling writes, 'that I never admired him so much as at this crisis. He evidently thought he had been ill-treated; but I never heard him make an unfair or irritable remark, nor did he seem in anywise stunned by the blow he had received, or dismayed by the isolated position in which he stood. I should say that he seemed to consider that he had a quarrel put upon him which it was his wisest course to close by receiving the fire of his adversary and not returning it. He could not in fact have gained a victory against the Premier on the ground which Lord John Russell had chosen for the combat which would not have been more permanently disadvantageous to him than a defeat. The faults of which he had been accused did not touch his own honour nor that of his country. Let them be admitted and there was an end of the matter. By and by an occasion would probably arise, in which he might choose an advantageous occasion for giving battle, and he was willing to wait calmly for that occasion.'

Lord Dalling judged accurately so far as his judgment went. But while we agree with him in thinking that Lord Palmerston refrained from returning his adversary's fire for the reasons Lord Dalling has given, we are strongly of opinion that other reasons too influenced Palmerston. He knew that he was not at that time much liked or trusted by the Queen and Prince Albert. He was not sorry that the fact should be made known to the world. He thoroughly understood English public opinion and was

not above taking advantage of its moods and its prejudices. He did not think a statesman would stand any the worse in the general estimation of the English public then because it was known that he was not admired by Prince Albert.

But the almost universal opinion of the House of Commons and of the clubs was that Lord Palmerston's career was closed. 'Palmerston is smashed!' was the common saying of the clubs. A night or two after the debate Lord Dalling met Mr. Disraeli on the staircase of the Russian Embassy, and Disraeli remarked to him that 'there was a Palmerston.'

Lord Palmerston evidently did not think so. The letters he wrote to friends immediately after his fall show him as jaunty and full of confidence as ever. He was quite satisfied with the way things had gone. He waited calmly for what he called a few days afterwards, 'My tit-for-tat with John Russell,' which came about indeed sooner than even he himself could well have expected.

We have not hestitated to express our opinion that throughout the whole of this particular dispute Lord Palmerston was in the wrong. He was in the wrong in many, if not most, of the controversies which had preceded it. That is to say, he was wrong in committing England, as he so often did, to measures which had not had the approval of the Sovereign or his colleagues. In the memorable dispute which brought matters to a crisis he seems to us to have been in the wrong not less in what he did than in his manner of doing it. Yet it ought not to have been difficult for a calm observer even at the time to see that Lord Palmerston was likely to have the best of the controversy in the end. The faults of which he was principally accused were not such as the English people would find it very hard to forgive. He was said to be too brusque and high-handed in his dealings with foreign States and ministers; but it did not seem to the English people in general as if this was an offence for which his own countrymen were bound to condemn him too severely. There was a general impression that his influence was exercised on behalf of popular movements abroad; and an impression nearly as general that if he had not acted a good deal on his own impulses and of his own authority he could hardly have served any popular cause so well. The *coup d'état* certainly was not popular in England. For a long time it was a subject of general reprehension; but even at that time men who condemned the *coup d'état* were not disposed to condemn Lord Palmerston over-much because, acting as usual on a personal impulse, he had in that instance made a mistake. There was even in his error something dashing, showy, and captivating to the general public. He made the influence of England felt, people said. His chief fault was that he was rather too strong for

those around him. If any grave crisis came, he, it was murmured, and he alone, would be equal to the occasion and would maintain the dignity of England. Neither in war nor in statesmanship does a man suffer much loss of popularity by occasionally disobeying orders and accomplishing daring feats. Lord Palmerston saw his way clearly at a critical period of his career. He saw that at that time there was, rightly or wrongly, a certain jealousy of the influence of Prince Albert, and he did not hesitate to take advantage of the fact. He bore his temporary disgrace with well-justified composure. 'The devil aids him surely,' says Sussex, speaking to Raleigh of Leicester in Scott's 'Kenilworth,' 'for all that would sink another ten fathom deep seems but to make him float the more easily.' Some rival may have thought thus of Lord Palmerston.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### BIRTH OF THE EMPIRE; DEATH OF 'THE DUKE.'

The year 1852 was one of profound emotion, and even excitement, in England. An able writer has remarked that the history of the Continent of Europe might be traced through the history of England, if all other sources of information were destroyed, by the influence which every great event in Continental affairs produces on the mood and policy of England. As the astronomer infers the existence and the attributes of some star his keenest glass will not reveal by the perturbations its neighbourhood causes to some body of light within its ken, so the student of English history might well discover commotion on the Continent by the evidence of a corresponding movement in England. All through the year 1852 the national mind of England was disturbed. The country was stirring itself in quite an unusual manner. A military spirit was exhibiting itself everywhere, not unlike that told of in Shakespeare's 'Henry the Fourth.' The England of 1852 seems to threaten that 'ere this year expire we bear our civil swords and native fire as far as France.' At least the civil swords were sharpened in order that the country might be ready for a possible and even an anticipated invasion from France. The Volunteer movement sprang into sudden existence. All over the country corps of young volunteers were being formed. An immense amount of national enthusiasm accompanied and acclaimed the formation of the volunteer army, which received the sanction of the Crown early in the year, and thus became a national institution.

The meaning of all this movement was explained some years after by

Mr. Tennyson, in a string of verses which did more honour perhaps to his patriotic feeling than to his poetic genius. The verses are absurdly unworthy of Tennyson as a poet; but they express with unmistakable clearness the popular sentiment of the hour; the condition of uncertainty, vague alarm, and very general determination to be ready at all events for whatever might come. 'Form, form, riflemen, form,' wrote the Laureate; 'better a rotten borough or two than a rotten fleet and a town in flames.' 'True that we have a faithful ally, but only the devil knows what he means.' This was the alarm and the explanation. We had a faithful ally, no doubt; but we certainly did not quite know what he meant. All the earlier part of the year had witnessed the steady progress of the Prince President of France to an imperial throne. The previous year had closed upon his *coup d'état*. He had arrested, imprisoned, banished, or shot his principal enemies, and had demanded from the French people a Presidency for ten years, a Ministry responsible to the executive power—himself alone—and two political Chambers to be elected by universal suffrage. Nearly five hundred prisoners, untried before any tribunal, even that of a drum-head, had been shipped off to Cayenne. The streets of Paris had been soaked in blood. The President instituted a *plébiscite*, or vote of the whole people, and of course he got all he asked for. There was no arguing with the commander of twenty legions, and of such legions as those that had operated with terrible efficiency on the Boulevards. The first day of the new year saw the religious ceremony at Notre Dame to celebrate the acceptance of the ten years' presidency by Louis Napoleon. The same day a decree was published in the name of the President declaring that the French eagle should be restored to the standards of the army, as a symbol of the regenerated military genius of France. A few days after, the Prince President decreed the confiscation of the property of the Orleans family and restored titles of nobility in France. The birthday of the Emperor Napoleon was declared by decree to be the only national holiday. When the two legislative bodies came to be sworn in, the President made an announcement which certainly did not surprise many persons, but which nevertheless sent a thrill abroad over all parts of Europe. If hostile parties continued to plot against him, the President intimated, and to question the legitimacy of the power he had assumed by virtue of the national vote, then it might be necessary to demand from the people, in the name of the repose of France, 'a new title which will irrevocably fix upon my head the power with which they have invested me.' There could be no further doubt. The Bonapartist Empire was to be restored. A new Napoleon was to come to the throne.

'Only the devil knows what he means' indeed. So people were all

saying throughout England in 1852. The scheme went on to its development, and before the year was quite out Louis Napoleon was proclaimed Emperor of the French. Men had noticed as a curious, not to say ominous, coincidence that on the very day when the Duke of Wellington died the *Moniteur* announced that the French people were receiving the Prince President everywhere as the Emperor-elect and as the elect of God; and another French journal published an article hinting not obscurely at the invasion and conquest of England as the first great duty of a new Napoleonic Empire. The Prince President indeed, in one of the provincial speeches which he delivered just before he was proclaimed Emperor, had talked earnestly of peace. In his famous speech to the Chamber of Commerce of Bordeaux on October 9, he denied that the restored Empire would mean war. 'I say,' he declared, raising his voice and speaking with energy and emphasis, 'the Empire is peace.' But the assurance did not do much to satisfy Europe. Had not the same voice, it was asked, declaimed with equal energy and earnestness the terms of the oath to the Republican Constitution? Never, said a bitter enemy of the new Empire, believe the word of a Bonaparte, unless when he promises to kill somebody. Such was indeed the common sentiment of a large number of the English people during the eventful year when the President became Emperor, and Prince Louis Napoleon was Napoleon the Third.

It would have been impossible that the English people could view all this without emotion and alarm. It had been clearly seen how the Prince President had carried his point thus far. He had appealed at every step to the memory of the Napoleonic legend. He had in every possible way revived and reproduced the attributes of the reign of the Great Emperor. His accession to power was strictly a military and a Napoleonic triumph. In ordinary circumstances the English people would not have troubled themselves much about any change in the form of government of a foreign country. They might have felt a strong dislike for the manner in which such a change had been brought about; but it would have been in nowise a matter of personal concern to them. But they could not see with indifference the rise of a new Napoleon to power on the strength of the old Napoleonic legend. The one special characteristic of the Napoleonic principle was its hostility to England. The life of the Great Napoleon in its greatest days had been devoted to the one purpose of humiliating England. His plans had been foiled by England. Whatever hands may have joined in pressing him to the ground, there could be no doubt that he owed his fall principally to England. He died a prisoner of England, and with his hatred of her embittered rather than appeased. It did not seem unreasonable to believe that the successor who had been enabled to

mount the Imperial throne simply because he bore the name and represented the principles of the First Napoleon would inherit the hatred to England and the designs against England. Everything else that savoured of the Napoleonic era had been revived; why should this, its principal characteristic, be allowed to lie in the tomb of the First Emperor? The policy of the First Napoleon had lighted up a fire of hatred between England and France which at one time seemed inextinguishable. There were many who regarded that international hate as something like that of the hostile brothers in the classic story, the very flames of whose funeral piles refused to mingle in the air; or like that of the rival Scottish families, whose blood, it was said, would never commingle though poured into one dish. It did not seem possible that a new Emperor Napoleon could arise without bringing a restoration of that hatred along with him.

There were some personal reasons, too, for particular distrust of the upcoming Emperor among the English people. Louis Napoleon had lived many years in England. He was as well known there as any prominent member of the English aristocracy. He went a good deal into very various society, literary, artistic, merely fashionable, purely rowdy, as well as into that political society which might have seemed natural to him. In all circles the same opinion appears to have been formed of him. From the astute Lord Palmerston to the most ignorant of the horse-jockeys and ballet-girls with whom he occasionally consorted, all who met him seemed to think of the Prince in much the same way. It was agreed on all hands that he was a fatuous, dreamy, moony, impracticable, stupid young man. A sort of stolid amiability, not enlightened enough to keep him out of low company and questionable conduct, appeared to be his principal characteristic. He constantly talked of his expected accession somehow and some time to the throne of France, and people only smiled pityingly at him. His attempts at Strasburg and Boulogne had covered him with ridicule and contempt. We cannot remember one authentic account of any Englishman of mark at that time having professed to see any evidence of capacity and strength of mind in Prince Louis Napoleon.

When the *coup d'état* came and was successful, the amazement of the English public was unbounded. Never had any plot been more skilfully and more carefully planned; more daringly carried out. Here evidently was a master in the art of conspiracy. Here was the combination of steady caution and boundless audacity. What a subtlety of design; what a perfection of silent self-control! How slowly the plan had been matured; how suddenly it was flashed upon the world and carried to success. No haste; no delay; no scruple, no remorse, no fear! And all this was the work of the dull dawdler of English drawing-rooms, the heavy, apathetic,

unmoral rather than immoral haunter of English race-courses and gambling houses! What new surprise might not be feared, what subtle and daring enterprise might not reasonably be expected from one who could thus conceal and thus reveal himself, and do both with a like success!

Louis Napoleon, said a member of his family, deceived Europe twice: first when he succeeded in passing off as an idiot, and next when he succeeded in passing off as a statesman. The epigram had doubtless a great deal of truth in it. The *coup d'état* was probably neither planned nor carried to success by the energy of Louis Napoleon. Cooler and stronger heads and hands are responsible for the execution at least of that enterprise. The Prince, it is likely, played little more than a passive part in it, and might have lost his nerve more than once but for the greater resolution of some of his associates, who were determined to crown him for their own sakes as well as for his. But at the time the world at large saw only Louis Napoleon in the whole scheme, conception, execution, and all. The idea was formed of a colossal figure of cunning and daring—a Brutus, a Talleyrand, a Philip of Spain, and a Napoleon the First all in one. Those who detested him most admired and feared him not the least. Who can doubt, it was asked, that he will endeavour to make himself the heir of the revenges of Napoleon? Who can believe any pledges he may give? How enter into any treaty or bond of any kind with such a man? Where is the one that can pretend to say he sees through him and understands his schemes?

Had Louis Napoleon any intention at any time of invading England? We are inclined to believe that he never had a regular fixed plan of the kind. But we are also inclined to think that the project entered into his mind with various other ideas and plans more or less vague; and that circumstances might have developed it into an actual scheme. Louis Napoleon was above all things a man of ideas in the inferior sense of the word; that is to say, he was always occupying himself with vague, dreamy suggestions of plans that might in this, that, or the other case be advantageously pursued. He had come to power probably with the determination to keep it and make himself acceptable to France first of all. After this came doubtless the sincere desire to make France great and powerful and prosperous. At first he had no particular notion of the way to establish himself as a popular ruler, and it is certain that he turned over all manner of plans in his mind for the purpose. Among these must certainly have been one for the invasion of England and the avenging of Waterloo. He let drop hints at times which showed that he was thinking of something of the kind. He talked of himself as representing a defeat. He was attacked with all the bitterness of a not unnatural but very unrestrained animosity

in the English press for his conduct in the *coup d'état*; and no doubt he and his companions were greatly exasperated. The mood of a large portion of the French people was distinctly aggressive. Ashamed to some degree of much that had been done and that they had had to suffer, many Frenchmen were in that state of dissatisfaction with themselves which makes people eager to pick a quarrel with someone else. Had Louis Napoleon been inclined, he might doubtless have easily stirred his people to the war mood; and it is not to be believed that he did not occasionally contemplate the expediency of doing something of the kind. Assuredly, if he had thought such an enterprise necessary to the stability of his reign, he would have risked even a war with England. But it would not have been tried except as a last resource; and the need did not arise. No one could have known better the risks of such an attempt. He knew England as his uncle never did; and if he had not his uncle's energy or military genius, he had far more knowledge of the world and of the relative resources and capabilities of nations. He would not have done anything rash without great necessity or the prospect of very certain benefit in the event of success.

An invasion of England was not, therefore, a likely event. Looking back composedly now on what actually did happen, we may safely say that few things were less likely. But it was not by any means an impossible event. The more composedly one looks back to it now, the more he will be compelled to admit that it was at least on the cards. The feeling of national uneasiness and alarm was not a mere panic. There were five projects with which public opinion all over Europe specially credited Louis Napoleon when he began his imperial reign. One was a war with Russia. Another was a war with Austria. A third was a war with Prussia. A fourth was the annexation of Belgium. The fifth was the invasion of England. Three of these projects were carried out. The fourth we know was in contemplation. Our combination with France in the first project probably put all serious thought of the fifth out of the head of the French Emperor. He got far more prestige out of an alliance with us than he could ever have got out of any quarrel with us; and he had little or no risk. We do not count for anything the repeated assurances of Louis Napoleon that he desired above all things to be on friendly terms with England. These assurances were doubtless sincere at the moment when they were made, and under the circumstances of that moment. But altered circumstances might at any time have induced an altered frame of mind. The very same assurances were made again and again to Russia, to Austria and to Prussia. The pledge that the Empire was peace was addressed, like the Pope's edict, *urbi et orbi*.

Therefore we do not look upon the mood of England in 1852 as one

of idle and baseless panic. The same feeling broke into life again in 1859, when the Emperor of the French suddenly announced his determination to go to war with Austria. It was in this latter period indeed that the Volunteer movement became a great national organisation, and that the Laureate did his best to rouse it into activity in the verses of hardly doubtful merit to which we have already referred. But in 1852 the beginning of an army of volunteers was made; and, what is of more importance to the immediate business of our history, the Government determined to bring in a bill for the reorganisation of the national militia.

Our militia was not in any case a body to be particularly proud of at that time. It had fallen into decay, and almost into disorganisation Nothing could have been a more proper work for any Government than its restoration to efficiency and respectability. Nothing, too, could have been more timely than a measure to make it efficient in view of the altered condition of European affairs and the increased danger of disturbance at home and abroad. We had on our hands at the time, too, one of our little wars—a Caffre war, which was protracted to a vexatious length, and which was not without serious military difficulty. It began in the December of 1850, and was not completely disposed of before the early part of 1853. We could not, therefore, afford to have our defences in any defective condition, and no labour was more fairly incumbent on a Government than the task of making them adequate to their purpose. But it was an unfortunate characteristic of Lord John Russell's Government that it attempted so much legislation, not because some particular scheme commended itself to the mature wisdom of the Ministry, but because something had to be done in a hurry to satisfy public opinion; and the Government could not think of anything better at the moment than the first scheme that came to hand. Lord John Russell accordingly introduced a Militia Bill, which was in the highest degree inadequate and unsatisfactory. The principal peculiarity of it was that it proposed to substitute a local militia for the regular force that had been in existence. Lord Palmerston saw great objections to this alteration, and urged them with much briskness and skill on the night when Lord John Russell explained his measure. When Palmerston began his speech, he probably intended to be merely critical as regarded points in the measure which were susceptible of amendment; but as he went on he found more and more that he had the House with him. Every objection he made, every criticism he urged, almost every sentence he spoke drew down increasing cheers. Lord Palmerston saw that the House was not only thoroughly with him on this ground, but throughly against the Government on various grounds. A few nights

after he followed up his first success by proposing a resolution to substitute the word 'regular' for the word 'local' in the bill; thus, in fact, to reconstruct the bill on an entirely different principle from that adopted by its framer. The effort was successful. The Peelites went with Palmerston; the Protectionists followed him as well; and the result was that 136 votes were given for the amendment, and only 125 against it. The Government were defeated by a majority of eleven. Lord John Russell instantly announced that he could no longer continue in office, as he did not possess the confidence of the country.

The announcement took the House by surprise. Lord Palmerston had not himself expected any such result from his resolution. There was no reason why the Government should not have amended their bill on the basis of the resolution passed by the House. The country wanted a scheme of efficient defence, and the Government were only called upon to make their scheme efficient. But Lord John Russell was well aware that his Administration had been losing its authority little by little. Since the time when it had returned to power, simply because no one could form a Ministry any stronger than itself, it had been only a Government on sufferance. Ministers who assume office in that stopgap way seldom retain it long in England. The Gladstone Government illustrated this fact in 1873, when they consented to return to office because Mr. Disraeli was not then in a condition to come in, and were dismissed by an overwhelming majority at the elections in the following spring. Lord Palmerston assigned one special reason for Lord John Russell's promptness in resigning on the change in the Militia Bill. The great motive for the step was, according to Palmerston, 'the fear of being defeated on the vote of censure about the Cape affairs, which was to have been moved to-day; as it is, the late Government have gone out on a question which they have treated as a motion, merely asserting that they had lost the confidence of the House; whereas, if they had gone out on a defeat upon the motion about the Cape, they would have carried with them the direct censure of the House of Commons.' The letter from Lord Palmerston to his brother, from which these words are quoted, begins with a remarkable sentence: 'I have had my tit-for-tat with John Russell, and I turned him out on Friday last.' Palmerston did not expect any such result, he declared; but the revenge was doubtless sweet for all that. This was in February 1852; and it was only in the December of the previous year that Lord Palmerston was compelled to leave the Foreign Office by Lord John Russell. The same influence, oddly enough, was the indirect cause of both events. Lord Palmerston lost his place because of his recognition of Louis Napoleon; Lord John Russell fell from power while endeavouring

to introduce a measure suggested by Louis Napoleon's successful usurpation. It will be seen in a future chapter how the influence of Louis Napoleon was once again fatal to each statesman in turn.

The Russell Ministry had done little and initiated less. It had carried on Peel's system by throwing open the markets to foreign as well as colonial sugar, and by the repeal of the Navigation Laws enabled merchants to employ foreign ships and seamen in the conveyance of their goods. It had made a mild and ineffectual effort at a Reform Bill, and had feebly favoured attempts to admit Jews to Parliament. It sank from power with an unexpected collapse in which the nation felt small concern.

Lord Palmerston did not come to power again at that moment. He might have gone in with Lord Derby if he had been so inclined. But Lord Derby, who, it may be said, had succeeded to that title on the death of his father in the preceding year, still talked of testing the policy of Free Trade at a general election, and of course Palmerston was not disposed to have anything to do with such a proposition. Nor had Palmerston in any case much inclination to serve under Derby, of whose political intelligence he thought poorly, and whom he regarded principally as what he called a 'a flashy speaker.' Lord Derby tried various combinations in vain, and at last had to experiment with a Cabinet of undiluted Protectionists. He had to take office, not because he wanted it, or because anyone in particular wanted him; but simply and solely because there was no one else who could undertake the task. He formed a Cabinet to carry on the business of the country for the moment and until it should be convenient to have a general election, when he fondly hoped that by some inexplicable process a Protectionist reaction would be brought about, and he should find himself at the head of a strong administration.

The Ministry which Lord Derby was able to form was not a strong one. Lord Palmerston described it as containing two men of mark, Derby and Disraeli, and a number of ciphers. It had not, except for these two, a single man of any political ability, and had hardly one of any political experience. It had an able lawyer for Lord Chancellor, Lord St. Leonards, but he was nothing of a politician. The rest of the members of the Government were respectable country gentlemen. One of them, Mr. Herries, had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in a short-lived Government, that of Lord Goderich, in 1827; and he had held the office of Secretary of War for a few months some time later. He was forgotten by the existing generation of politicians, and the general public only knew that he was still living when they heard of his accession to Lord Derby's

Government. The Earl of Malmesbury, Sir John Pakington, Mr. Walpole, Mr. Henley, and the rest, were men whose antecedents scarcely gave them warrant for any higher claim in public life than the position of chairman of quarter sessions; nor did their subsequent career in office contribute much to establish a loftier estimate of their capacity. The head of the Government was remarkable for his dashing blunders as a politician, quite as much as for his dashing eloquence. His new lieutenant, Mr. Disraeli, had in former days christened him very happily, 'the Rupert of Debate,' after that fiery and gallant prince whose blunders generally lost the battles which his headlong courage had nearly won.

Concerning Mr. Disraeli himself it is not too much to say that many of his own party were rather more afraid of his genius than of the dullness of any of his colleagues. It is not a pleasant task in the best of circumstances to be at the head of a tolerated Ministry in the House of Commons: a Ministry which is in a minority and only holds its place because there is no one ready to relieve it of the responsibility of office. Mr. Disraeli himself, at a much later date, gave the House of Commons an amusing picture of the trials and humiliations which await the leader of such a forlorn hope. He had now to assume that position without any previous experience of office. Rarely indeed is the leadership of the House of Commons undertaken by anyone who has not previously held office; and Mr. Disraeli entered upon leadership and office at the same moment for the first time. He became Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons. Among the many gifts with which he was accredited by fame, not a single admirer had hitherto dreamed of including a capacity for the mastery of figures. In addition to all the ordinary difficulties of the Ministry of a minority there was, in this instance, the difficulty arising from the obscurity and inexperience of nearly all its members. Facetious persons dubbed the new administration the 'Who? Who? Ministry.' The explanation of this odd nickname was found in a story then in circulation about the Duke of Wellington. The Duke, it was said, was anxious to hear from Lord Derby at the earliest moment all about the composition of his Cabinet. He was overheard asking the new Prime Minister in the House of Lords the names of his intended colleagues. The Duke was rather deaf, and, like most deaf persons, spoke in very loud tones, and of course had to be answered in tones also rather elevated. That which was meant for a whispered conversation became audible to the whole House. As Lord Derby mentioned each name, the Duke asked in wonder and eagerness, 'Who? Who?' After each new name came the same enquiry. The Duke of Wellington had clearly never heard of most of the new Ministers before. The story went about; and Lord Derby's Administration was familiarly known as the 'Who? Who? Government.'

Lord Derby entered office with the avowed intention of testing the Protection question all over again. But he was no sooner in office than he found that the bare suggestion had immensely increased his difficulties. The formidable organisation which had worked the Free Trade cause so successfully seemed likely to come into political life again with all its old vigour. The Free Traders began to stand together again the moment Lord Derby gave his unlucky hint. Every week that passed over his head did something to show him the mistake he had made when he hampered himself with any such undertaking as the revival of the Protection question. Some of his colleagues had been unhappily and blunderingly outspoken in their addresses to their constituents seeking for re-election, and had talked as if the restoration of Protection itself were the grand object of Lord Derby's taking office. The new Chancellor of the Exchequer had been far more cautious. He only talked vaguely of 'those remedial measures which great productive interests, suffering from unequal taxation, have a right to expect from a just Government.' In truth, Mr. Disraeli was well convinced at this time of the hopelessness of any agitation for the restoration of Protection, and would have been only too glad of any opportunity for a complete and at the same time a safe disavowal of any sympathy with such a project. The Government found their path bristling with troubles, created for them by their own mistake in giving any hint about the demand for a new trial of the Free Trade question. Any chance they might otherwise have had of making effective head against their very trying difficulties was completely cut away from them.

The Free Trade League was reorganised. A conference of Liberal members of the House of Commons was held at the residence of Lord John Russell in Chesham Place, at which it was resolved to extract or extort from the Government a full avowal of their policy with regard to Protection and Free Trade. The feat would have been rather difficult of accomplishment, seeing that the Government had absolutely no policy to offer on the subject, and were only hoping to be able to consult the country as one might consult an oracle. The Chancellor of the Exchequer when he made his financial statement accepted the increased prosperity of the few years preceding with an unction which showed that he at least had no particular notion of attempting to reverse the policy which had so greatly contributed to its progress. Mr. Disraeli pleased the Peelites and the Liberals much more by his statement than he pleased his chief or many of his followers. His speech indeed was very clever. A new financial scheme he could not produce, for he had not had time to make anything like a complete examination of the finances of the country; but

he played very prettily and skilfully with the facts and figures, and conveyed to the listeners the idea of a man who could do wonderful things in finance if he only had a little time and were in the humour. Everyone outside the limits of the extreme and unconverted Protectionists was pleased with the success of his speech. People were glad that one who had proved himself so clever with many things should have shown himself equal to the uncongenial and unwonted task of dealing with dry facts and figures. The House felt that he was placed in a very trying position, and was well pleased to see him hold his own so successfully in it.

Mr. Disraeli merely proposed in his financial statement to leave things as he found them; to continue the income-tax for another year, as a provisional arrangement pending that complete re-examination of the financial affairs of the country to which he intimated that he found himself quite equal at the proper time. No one could suggest any better course; and the new Chancellor came off on the whole with flying colours. His very difficulties had been a source of advantage to him. He was not expected to produce a financial scheme at such short notice; and if he was not equal to a financier's task, it did not so appear on this first occasion of trial. The Government on the whole did not do badly during this period of their probation. They introduced and carried a Militia Bill, for which they obtained the cordial support of Lord Palmerston; and they gave a Constitution to New Zealand; and then, in the beginning of July, the Parliament was prorogued and the dissolution took place. The elections were signalised by very serious riots in many parts of the country. In Ireland particularly party passions ran high. The landlords and the police were on one side; the priests and the popular party on the other; and in several places there was some bloodshed. It was not in Ireland, however, a question about Free Trade or Protection. The great mass of the Irish people knew nothing about Mr. Disraeli—probably had never heard his name, and did not care who led the House of Commons. The question which agitated the Irish constituences was that of Tenant Right, in the first instance; and the time had not yet arrived when a great Minister from either party was prepared to listen to their demands on this subject. There was also much bitterness of feeling remaining from the discussions on the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. But it may be safely said that not one of the questions that stirred up public feeling in England had the slightest popular interest in Ireland, and the question which the Irish people considered essential to their very existence did not enter for one moment into the struggles that were going on all over England.

The speeches of ministers in England showed the same lively diversity as before on the subject of Protection. Mr. Disraeli not only threw

Protection overboard, but boldly declared that no one could have supposed the Ministry had the slightest intention of proposing to bring back the laws that were repealed in 1846. In fact the time, he declared, had gone by when such exploded politics could even interest the people of this country. On the other hand, several of Mr. Disraeli's colleagues evidently spoke in the fullness of their simple faith that Lord Derby was bent on setting up again the once beloved and not yet forgotten protective system. But from the time of the elections nothing more was heard about Protection or about the possibility of getting a new trial for its principles. The elections did little or nothing for the Government. The dreams of a strengthened party at their back were gone. They gained a little, just enough to make it unlikely that anyone would move a vote of want of confidence at the very outset of their reappearance before Parliament, but not nearly enough to give them a chance of carrying any measure which could really propitiate the Conservative party throughout the country. They were still to be the Ministry of a minority; a Ministry on sufferance. They were a Ministry on sufferance when they appealed to the country, but they were able to say then that when their cause had been heard the country would declare for them. They now came back to be a Ministry on sufferance, who had made the appeal and had seen it rejected. It was plain to everyone that their existence as a Ministry was only a question of days. Speculation was already busy as to their successors; and it was evident that a new Government could only be formed by some sort of coalition between the Whigs and the Peelites.

Among the noteworthy events of the general elections was the return of Macaulay to the House of Commons. Edinburgh elected him in a manner particularly complimentary to him and honourable to herself. He was elected without his solicitation, without his putting himself forward as a candidate, without his making any profession of faith or doing any of the things that the most independent candidate was then expected to do; and in fact, in spite of his positive declaration that he would do nothing to court election. He had for some years been absent from Parliament. Some difference had arisen between him and certain of his constituents on the subject of the Maynooth grant. Complaints too had been made by Edinburgh constituents of Macaulay's lack of attention to local interests, and of the intellectual scorn which as they believed he exhibited in his intercourse with many of those who had supported him. The result of this was that at the general election of 1847 Macaulay was left third on the poll at Edinburgh. He felt this deeply. He might have easily found some other constituency; but his wounded pride hastened a resolution he had for some time been forming to retire to a life of private literary

labour. He therefore remained out of Parliament. In 1852 the movement of Edinburgh towards him was entirely spontaneous. Edinburgh was anxious to atone for the error of which she had been guilty. Macaulay would go no farther than to say that if Edinburgh spontaneously elected him he should deem it a very high honour; and 'should not feel myself justified in refusing to accept a public trust offered to me in a manner so honourable and so peculiar.' But he would not do anything whatever to court favour. He did not want to be elected to Parliament, he said; he was very happy in his retirement. Edinburgh elected him on those terms. He was not long allowed by his health to serve her; but so long as he remained in the House of Commons it was as member for Edinburgh.

On September 14, 1852, the Duke of Wellington died. His end was singularly peaceful. He fell quietly asleep about a quarter-past three in the afternoon in Walmer Castle, and he did not wake any more. He was a very old man—in his eighty-fourth year—and his death had naturally been looked for as an event certain to come soon. Yet when it did come thus naturally and peacefully, it created a profound public emotion. No other man in our time ever held the position in England which the Duke of Wellington had occupied for more than a whole generation. The place he had won for himself was absolutely unique. His great deeds belonged to a past time. He was hardly anything of a statesman; he knew little and cared less about what may be called statecraft; and as an administrator he had made many mistakes. But the trust which the nation had in him as a counsellor was absolutely unlimited. It never entered into the mind of any one to suppose that the Duke of Wellington was actuated in any step he took, or advice he gave, by any feeling but a desire for the good of the State. His loyalty to the Sovereign had something antique and touching in it. There was a blending of personal affection with the devotion of a state servant which lent a certain romantic dignity to the demeanour and character of one who otherwise had but little of the poetical or the sentimental in his nature. In the business of politics he had but one prevailing anxiety, and that was that the Queen's Government should be satisfactorily carried on. He gave up again and again his own most cherished convictions, most ingrained prejudices, in order that he might not stand in the way of the Queen's Government and the proper carrying of it on. This simple fidelity, sometimes rather whimsically displayed, stood him often in stead of an exalted statesmanship, and enabled him to extricate the Government and the nation from difficulties in which a political insight far more keen than his might have failed to prove a guide.

It was for this true and tried, this simple and unswerving devotion

to the national good that the people of England admired and revered him. He had not what would be called a loveable temperament, and yet the nation loved him. He was cold and brusque in manner, and seemed in general to have hardly a gleam of the emotional in him. This was not because he lacked affections. On the contrary, his affections and his friendships were warm and enduring; and even in public he had more than once given way to outbursts of emotion such as a stranger would never have expected from one of that cold and rigid demeanour. When Sir Robert Peel died, Wellington spoke of him in the House of Lords with the tears which he did not even try to control running down his cheeks. But in his ordinary bearing there was little of the manner that makes a man a popular idol. He was not brilliant or dashing, or emotional or graceful. He was dry, cold, self-contained. Yet the people loved him and trusted in him; loved him perhaps especially because they so trusted in him. No face and figure were better known at one time to the population of London than those of the Duke of Wellington. Of late his form had grown stooped, and he bent over his horse as he rode in the Park or down Whitehall like one who could hardly keep himself in the saddle. Yet he mounted his horse to the last, and, indeed, could keep in the saddle after he had ceased to be able to sit erect in an arm-chair. He sometimes rode in a curious little cab of his own devising; but his favourite way of going about London was on the back of his horse. He was called, *par excellence*, 'the Duke.' The London working man who looked up as he went to or from his work and caught a sight of the bowed figure on the horse, took off his hat and told some passer-by, 'There goes the Duke!' His victories belonged to the past. They were but traditions even to middle-aged men in 'the Duke's' later years. But he was regarded still as an embodiment of the national heroism and success; a modern St. George in a tightly-buttoned frock-coat and white trowsers.

Wellington belonged so much to the past at the time of his death that it seems hardly in place here to say anything about his character as a soldier. But it may be remarked that his success was due in great measure to a sort of inspired common sense which rose to something like genius. He had in the highest conceivable degree the art of winning victories. In war, as in statesmanship, he had one characteristic which is said to have been the special gift of Julius Cæsar, and for the lack of which Cæsar's greatest modern rival in the art of conquest, the first Napoleon, lost all, or nearly all, that he had won. Wellington not only understood what could be done, but also what could not be done. The wild schemes of almost universal rule which set Napoleon astray and led him to his destruction would have appeared to the strong common sense of the Duke of Welling-

ton as impossible and absurd as they would have looked to the lofty intelligence of Cæsar. It can hardly be questioned that in original genius Napoleon far surpassed the Duke of Wellington. But Wellington always knew exactly what he could do, and Napoleon often confounded his ambitions with his capacities. Wellington provided for everything, looked after everything; never trusted to his star or to chance or to anything but care and preparation and the proper application of means to ends. Under almost any conceivable conditions, Wellington, pitted against Napoleon, was the man to win in the end. The very genius of Napoleon would sooner or later have left him open to the unsleeping watchfulness, the almost infallible judgment of Wellington.

He was as fortunate as he was deserving. No man could have drunk more deeply of the cup of fame and fortune than Wellington; and he was never for one moment intoxicated by it. After all his long wars and his splendid victories he had some thirty-seven years of peace and glory to enjoy. He held the loftiest position in this country that any man not a sovereign could hold, and he ranked far higher in the estimation of his countrymen than most of their sovereigns have done. The rescued emperors and kings of Europe had showered their honours on him. His fame was as completely secured during his lifetime as if death, by removing him from the possibility of making a mistake, had consecrated it. No new war under altered conditions tried the flexibility and the endurance of the military genius which had defeated in turn all Napoleon's great marshals as a prelude to the defeat of Napoleon himself. If ever any mortal may be said to have had in life all he could have desired, Wellington was surely that man. He might have found a new contentment in his honours, if he really cared much about them, in the reflection than he had done nothing for himself, but all for the State. He did not love war. He had no inclination whatever for it. When Lord John Russell visited Napoleon in Elba, Napoleon asked him whether he thought the Duke of Wellington would be able to live thenceforward without the excitement of war. It was probably in Napoleon's mind that the English soldier would be constantly entangling his country in foreign complications for the sake of gratifying his love for the brave squares of war. Lord John Russell endeavoured to impress upon the great fallen Emperor that the Duke of Wellington would as a matter of course lapse into the place of a simple citizen, and would look with no manner of regret to the stormy days of battle. Napoleon seems to have listened with a sort of melancholy incredulity, and only observed once or twice that 'it was a splendid game, war.' To Wellington it was no splendid game, or game of any sort. It was a stern duty to be done for his Sovereign and his country, and to be got through as quickly as possible.

The difference between the two men cannot be better illustrated. It is impossible to compare two such men. There is hardly any common basis of comparison. To say which is the greater, one must first make up his mind as to whether his standard of greatness is genius or duty. Napoleon has made a far deeper impression on history. If that be superior greatness, it would be scarcely possible for any national partiality to claim an equal place for Wellington. But Englishmen may be content with the reflection that their hero saved his country, and that Napoleon nearly ruined his. We write this without the slightest inclination to sanction what may be called the British Philistine view of the character of Napoleon. Up to a certain period of his career it seems to us deserving of almost unmingled admiration; just as his country, in her earlier disputes with the other European Powers, seems to have been almost entirely in the right. But his success and his glory were too strong for Napoleon. He fell for the very want of that simple, steadfast devotion to duty which inspired Wellington always, and which made him seem dignified and great, even in statesmanship for which he was unfitted, and even when in statesmanship he was acting in a manner that would have made another man seem ridiculous rather than respectable. Wellington more nearly resembled Washington than Napoleon. He was a much greater soldier than Washington; but he was not on the whole so great a man.

It is fairly to be said for Wellington that the proportions of his personal greatness seem to grow rather than to dwindle as he and his events are removed from us by time. The battle of Waterloo does not indeed stand, as one of its historians has described it, among the decisive battles of the world. It was fought to keep the Bonapartes off the throne of France; and in twenty-five years after Waterloo, while the victor of Waterloo was yet living, another Bonaparte was preparing to mount that throne. It was the climax of a national policy, which, however justifiable and inevitable it may have become in the end, would hardly now be justified as to its origin by one intelligent Englishman out of twenty. The present age is not, therefore, likely to become rhapsodical over Wellington, as our forefathers might have been, merely because he defeated the French and crushed Napoleon. Yet it is impossible for the coolest mind to study the career of Wellington without feeling a constant glow of admiration for that singular course of simple antique devotion to duty. His was truly the spirit in which a great nation must desire to be served.

The nation was not ungrateful. It heaped honours on Wellington; it would have heaped more on him if it knew how. It gave him its almost unqualified admiration. On his death it tried to give him such a public funeral as hero never had. The pageant was indeed a splendid and a gorge-

ous exhibition. It was not perhaps very well suited to the temperament and habits of the cold and simple hero to whose honour it was got up. Nor, perhaps, are gorgeous pageants exactly the sort of performance in which as a nation England particularly excels. But in the vast, silent, respectful crowd that thronged the London streets—a crowd such as no other city in the world could show—there was better evidence than pageantry or ceremonial could supply of the esteem in which the living generation held the hero of the last. The name of Wellington had long ceased to represent any hostility of nation to nation. The crowds who filled the streets of London that day had no thought of the kind of sentiment which used to fill the breasts of their fathers when France and Napoleon were named. They honoured Wellington only as one who had always served his country; as the soldier of England and not as the invader of France, or even as the conqueror of Napoleon. The homage to his memory was as pure of selfish passion as his own career.

The new Parliament was called together in November. It brought into public life in England a man who afterwards made some mark in our politics, and whose intellect and debating power seemed at one time to promise him a position inferior to that of hardly anyone in the House of Commons. This was Mr. Robert Lowe, who had returned from one of the Australian colonies to enter political life in his native country. Mr. Lowe was a scholar of a highly cultured order; and, despite some serious defects of delivery, he proved to be a debater of the very highest class, especially gifted with the weapons of sarcasm, scorn, and invective. He was a Liberal in the intellectual sense; he was opposed to all restraints on education and on the progress of a career; but he had a detestation for democratic doctrines which almost amounted to a mania. He despised with the whole force of a temperament very favourable to intellectual scorn alike the rural Tory and the town Radical. His opinions were generally rather negative than positive. He did not seem to have any very positive opinions of any kind where politics were concerned. He was governed by a detestation of abstractions and sentimentalities, and 'views' of all sorts. An intellectual Don Juan of the political world, he believed with Molière's hero that two and two make four, and that four and four make eight, and he was impatient of any theory which would commend itself to the mind on less rigorous evidence. If contempt for the intellectual weaknesses of an opposing party or doctrine could have made a great politician, Mr. Lowe would have won that name. In politics, however, criticism is not enough. One must be able to originate, to mould the will of others, to compromise, to lead while seeming to follow, often to follow while seeming to lead. Of gifts like these Mr. Lowe had no share. He never became more than a great Parliamentary critic of the acrid and vitriolic style.

Almost immediately on the assembling of the new Parliament, Mr. Villiers brought forward a resolution not merely pledging the House of Commons to a Free Trade policy, but pouring out a sort of censure on all who had hitherto failed to recognise its worth. This step was thought necessary, and was indeed made necessary by the errors of which Lord Derby had been guilty, and the preposterous vapourings of some of his less responsible followers. If the resolution had been passed, the Government must have resigned. They were willing enough now to agree to any resolution declaring that Free Trade was the established policy of the country; but they could not accept the triumphant eulogium which the resolution proposed to offer to the commercial policy of the years when they were the uncompromising enemies of that very policy. They could submit to the punishment imposed on them; but they did not like this public kissing of the rod and doing penance. Lord Palmerston, who even up to that time regarded his ultimate acceptance of office under Lord Derby as a not impossible event if once the Derby party could shake themselves quite free of Protection, devised an amendment which afforded them the means of a more or less honourable retreat. This resolution pledged the House to the 'policy of unrestricted competition firmly maintained and prudently extended'; but recorded no panegyric of the legislation of 1846, and consequent condemnation of those who opposed that legislation. The amendment was accepted by all but the small band of irreconcilable Protectionists: 468 voted for it; only 53 against it; and the moan of Protection was made. All that long chapter of English legislation was closed. Various commercial and other 'interests' did indeed afterwards demur to the application of the principle of unrestricted competition to their peculiar concerns. But they did not plead for Protection. They only contended that the Protection they sought for was not, in fact, Protection at all, but Free Trade under peculiar circumstances. The straightforward doctrine of Protection perished of the debate of November 1852.

Still the Government only existed on sufferance. Their tenure of office was somewhat rudely compared to that of a bailiff put into possession of certain premises, who is liable to be sent away at any moment when the two parties concerned in the litigation choose to come to terms. There was a general expectation that the moment Mr. Disraeli came to set out a genuine financial scheme the fate of the Government would be decided. So the event proved. Mr. Disraeli made a financial statement which showed remarkable capacity for dealing with figures. It was subjected to a far more serious test than his first budget, for that was necessarily a mere stopgap or makeshift. This was a real budget, altering

and reconstructing the financial system and the taxation of the country. The skill with which the Chancellor of the Exchequer explained his measures and tossed his figures about convinced many even of his strongest opponents that he had the capacity to make a good budget if he only were allowed to do so by the conditions of his party's existence. But his Cabinet had come into office under special obligations to the country party and the farmers. They could not avoid making some experiment in the way of special legislation for the farmers. They had at the very least to put on an appearance of doing something for them. The Chancellor of the Exchequer might be supposed to be in the position of the soldier in Hogarth's 'March to Finchley,' between the rival claimants on his attention. He has promised and vowed to the one; but he knows that the slightest mark of civility he offers to her will be fiercely resented by the other. When Mr. Disraeli undertook to favour the country interest and the farmers, he must have known only too well that he was setting all the Free Traders and Peelites against him; and he knew at the same time that if he neglected the country party he was cutting the ground from beneath his feet. The principle of his budget was the reduction of the malt duties and the increase of the inhabited house duty. Some manipulations of the income tax were to be introduced, chiefly with a view to lighten the impost on farmers' profits; and there was to be a modest reduction of the tea duty. The two points that stood out clear and prominent before the House of Commons were the reduction of the malt duty and the increase of the duty on inhabited houses. The reduction of the malt tax, as Mr. Lowe said in his pungent criticism, was the keystone of the budget. That reduction created a deficit, which the inhabited house duty had to be doubled in order to supply. The scheme was a complete failure. The farmers did not care much about the concession which had been made in their favour: those who had to pay for it in doubled taxation were bitterly indignant. Mr. Disraeli had exasperated the one claimant, and not greatly pleased the other. The Government soon saw how things were likely to go. The Chancellor of the Exchequer began to see that he had only a desperate fight to make. The Whigs, the Free Traders, the Peelites, and such independent members or unattached members as Mr. Lowe and Mr. Bernal Osborne all fell on him. It became a combat *à outrance*. It well suited Mr. Disraeli's peculiar temperament. During the whole of his Parliamentary career he has never fought so well as when he has been free to indulge to the full the courage of despair.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### MR. GLADSTONE.

The debate was one of the finest of its kind ever heard in Parliament during our time. The excitement on both sides was intense. The rivalry was hot and eager. Mr. Disraeli was animated by all the power of desperation, and was evidently in a mood neither to give nor to take quarter. He assailed Sir Charles Wood, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, with a vehemence and even a virulence which certainly added much to the piquancy and interest of the discussion so far as listeners were concerned, but which more than once went to the very verge of the limits of Parliamentary decorum. It was in the course of this speech that Disraeli, leaning across the table and directing his words full at Sir Charles Wood, declared, 'I care not to be the right honourable gentleman's critic; but if he has learned his business, he has yet to learn that petulance is not sarcasm, and that insolence is not invective.' The House had not heard the concluding word of Disraeli's bitter and impassioned speech, when at two o'clock in the morning Mr. Gladstone leaped to his feet to answer him. Then began that long Parliamentary duel which only knew a truce when at the close of the session of 1876 Mr. Disraeli crossed the threshold of the House of Commons for the last time, thenceforward to take his place among the peers as Lord Beaconsfield. During all the intervening four-and-twenty years these two men were rivals in power and in Parliamentary debate as much as ever Pitt and Fox had been. Their opposition, like that of Pitt and Fox, was one of temperament and character as well as of genius, position and political opinion. The rivalry of this first heated and eventful night was a splendid display. Those who had thought it impossible that any impression could be made upon the House after the speech of Mr. Disraeli had to acknowledge that a yet greater impression was produced by the unprepared reply of Mr. Gladstone. The House divided about four o'clock in the morning, and the Government were left in a minority of nineteen. Mr. Disraeli took the defeat with his characteristic composure. The morning was cold and wet. 'It will be an unpleasant day for going to Osborne,' he quietly remarked to a friend as they went down Westminster Hall together and looked out into the dreary streets. That day, at Osborne, the resignation of the Ministry was formally placed in the hands of the Queen.

In a few days after, the Coalition Ministry was formed. Lord Aberdeen

was Prime Minister; Lord John Russell took the Foreign Office; Lord Palmerston became Home Secretary; Mr. Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer. The public were a good deal surprised that Lord Palmerston had taken such a place as that of Home Secretary. His name had been identified with the foreign policy of England, and it was not supposed that he felt the slightest interest in the ordinary business of the Home Department. Palmerston himself explained in a letter to his brother that the Home Office was his own choice. He was not anxious to join the Ministry at all; and if he had to make one, he preferred that he should hold some office in which he had personally no traditions. 'I had long settled in my own mind,' he said, 'that I would not go back to the Foreign Office, and that if I ever took any office it should be the Home. It does not do for a man to pass his whole life in one department, and the Home Office deals with the concerns of the country internally and brings one in contact with one's fellow-countrymen; besides which it gives one more influence in regard to the militia and the defences of the country.' Lord Palmerston in fact announces that he has undertaken the business of the Home Office for the same reason as that given by Fritz, in the 'Grande Duchesse,' for becoming a schoolmaster. 'Can you teach?' asks the Grande Duchesse? 'No,' is the answer, '*c'est pour apprendre*;' 'I go to learn.' The reader may well suspect, however, that it was not only with a view of learning the business of the internal administration and becoming acquainted with his fellow-countrymen that Palmerston preferred the Home Office. He would not consent to be Foreign Secretary on any terms but his own, and these terms were then out of the question.

The principal interest felt in the new Government was not, however, centred in Lord Palmerston. The new Chancellor of the Exchequer was the man upon whom the eyes of curiosity and interest were chiefly turned. Mr. Gladstone was still a young man in the Parliamentary sense at least. He was but forty-three. His career had been in every way remarkable. He had entered public life at a very early age. He had been, to quote the words of Macaulay, a distinguished debater in the House of Commons ever since he was one-and-twenty. Criticising his book, 'The State in its Relations with the Church,' which was published in 1838, Macaulay speaks of Gladstone as 'a young man of unblemished character and of distinguished Parliamentary talents, the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories who follow reluctantly and mutinously a leader whose experience is indispensable to them, but whose cautious temper and moderate opinions they abhor.' The time was not so far away when the stern and unbending Tories would regard Gladstone as the greatest hope of their most bitter

enemies. Lord Macaulay goes on to overwhelm the views expressed by Mr. Gladstone as to the relations between State and Church, with a weight of argument and gorgeousness of illustration that now seem to have been hardly called for. One of the doctrines of the young statesman which Macaulay confutes with especial warmth, is the principle which, as he states it, 'would give the Irish a Protestant Church whether they like it or not.' The author of the book which contained this doctrine was the author of the disestablishment of the State Church in Ireland.

Mr. Gladstone was by birth a Lancashire man. It is not unworthy of notice that Lancashire gave to the Parliaments of recent times their three greatest orators: Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and the late Lord Derby. Mr. Gladstone was born in Liverpool, and was the son of Sir John Gladstone, a Scotchman, who founded a great house in the seaport of the Mersey. He entered Parliament when very young as a *protégé* of the Newcastle family, and he soon faithfully attached himself to Sir Robert Peel. His knowledge of finance, his thorough appreciation of the various needs of a nation's commerce and business, his middle-class origin, all brought him into natural affinity with his great leader. He became a Free Trader with Peel. He was not in the House of Commons, oddly enough, during the session when the Free Trade battle was fought and won. It has already been explained in this history that as he had changed his opinions with his leader he felt a reluctance to ask the support of the Newcastle family for the borough which by virtue of their influence he had previously represented. But except for that short interval his whole career may be pronounced one long Parliamentary success. He was from the very first recognised as a brilliant debater, and as one who promised to be an orator; but it was not until after the death of Sir Robert Peel that he proved himself the master of Parliamentary eloquence we all now know him to be. It was he who pronounced what may be called the funeral oration upon Peel in the House of Commons; but the speech, although undoubtedly inspired by the truest and the deepest feelings, does not seem by any means equal to some of his more recent efforts. There is an appearance of elaboration about it which goes far to mar its effect. Perhaps the first really great speech made by Gladstone was the reply to Disraeli on the memorable December morning which we have just described. That speech put him in the very foremost rank of English orators. Then perhaps he first showed to the full the one great quality in which as a Parliamentary orator he has never had a rival in our time: the readiness which seems to require no preparation, but can marshal all its arguments as if by instinct at a given moment, and the fluency which can pour out the most eloquent language as freely as though it were but the breath of

the nostrils. When, shortly after the formation of the Coalition Ministry, Mr. Gladstone delivered his first budget, it was regarded as a positive curiosity of financial exposition. It was a performance that belonged to the department of the fine arts. The speech occupied several hours, and assuredly no listener wished it the shorter by a single sentence. Pitt, we read, had the same art of making a budget speech a fascinating discourse; but in our time no minister has had this gift except Mr. Gladstone. Each time that he essayed the same task subsequently he accomplished just the same success. Mr. Gladstone's first oratorical qualification was his exquisite voice. Such a voice would make commonplace seem interesting and lend something of fascination to dulness itself. It was singularly pure, clear, resonant, and sweet. The orator never seemed to use the slightest effort or strain in filling any hall and reaching the ear of the farthest among the audience. It was not a loud voice or of great volume; but strong, vibrating and silvery. The words were always aided by energetic action and by the deep gleaming eyes of the orator. Somebody once said that Gladstone was the only man in the House who could talk in italics. The saying was odd, but was nevertheless appropriate and expressive. Gladstone could by the slightest modulation of his voice give all the emphasis of italics, of small print, or large print, or any other effect he might desire, to his spoken words. It is not to be denied that his wonderful gift of words sometimes led him astray. It was often such a fluency as that of a torrent on which the orator was carried away. Gladstone had to pay for his fluency by being too fluent. He could seldom resist the temptation to shower too many words on his subject and his hearers. Sometimes he involved his sentence in parenthesis within parenthesis until the ordinary listener began to think extrication an impossibility; but the orator never failed to unravel all the entanglements and to bring the passage out to a clear and legitimate conclusion. There was never any halt or incoherency, nor did the joints of the sentence fail to fit together in the right way. Harley once described a famous speech as 'a circumgyration of incoherent words.' This description certainly could not be applied even to Mr. Gladstone's most involved passages; but if some of those were described as a circumgyration of coherent words, the phrase might be considered germane to the matter. His style was commonly too redundant. It seemed as if it belonged to a certain school of exuberant Italian rhetoric. Yet it was hardly to be called florid. Gladstone indulged in few flowers of rhetoric, and his great gift was not imagination. His fault was simply the habitual use of too many words. This defect was indeed a characteristic of the Peelite school of eloquence. Mr. Gladstone retained some of the defects of the school in which he had been trained, even after he had come to surpass its greatest master.

Often, however, this superb, exuberant rush of words added indescribable strength to the eloquence of the speaker. In passages of indignant remonstrance or denunciation, when word followed word, and stroke came down upon stroke, with a wealth of resource that seemed inexhaustible, the very fluency and variety of the speaker overwhelmed his audience. Interruption only gave him a new stimulus, and appeared to supply him with fresh resources of argument and illustration. His retorts leaped to his lips. His eye caught sometimes even the mere gesture that indicated dissent or question; and perhaps some unlucky opponent who was only thinking of what might be said in opposition to the great orator found himself suddenly dragged into the conflict and overwhelmed with a torrent of remonstrance, argument, and scornful words. Gladstone had not much humour of the playful kind, but he had a certain force of sarcastic and scornful rhetoric. He was always terribly in earnest. Whether the subject were great or small, he threw his whole soul into it. Once, in addressing a schoolboy gathering, he told his young listeners that if a boy ran he ought always to run as fast as he could; if he jumped, he ought always to jump as far as he could. He illustrated his maxim in his own career. He had no idea apparently of running or jumping in such measure as happened to please the fancy of the moment. He always exercised his splendid powers to the uttermost strain.

A distinguished critic once pronounced Mr. Gladstone to be the greatest Parliamentary orator of our time, on the ground that he had made by far the greatest number of fine speeches, while admitting that two or three speeches had been made by other men of the day which might rank higher than any of his. This is, however, a principle of criticism which posterity never sanctions. The greatest speech, the greatest poem, give the author the highest place, though the effort were but single. Shakespeare would rank beyond Massinger just as he does now had he written only 'The Tempest.' We cannot say how many novels, each as good as 'Gil Blas,' would make Le Sage the equal of Cervantes. On this point fame is inexorable. We are not, therefore, inclined to call Mr. Gladstone the greatest English orator of our time when we remember some of the finest speeches of Mr. Bright; but did we regard Parliamentary speaking as a mere instrument of Parliamentary business and debate, then unquestionably Mr. Gladstone is not only the greatest, but by far the greatest English orator of our time; for he had a richer combination of gifts than any other man we can remember, and he could use them oftenest with effect. He was like a racer which cannot indeed always go faster than every rival, but can win more races in the year than any other horse. Mr. Gladstone could get up at any moment, and no matter how many times a night, in

the House of Commons, and be argumentative or indignant, pour out a stream of impassioned eloquence or a shower of figures just as the exigency of the debate and the moment required. He was not, of course, always equal; but he was always eloquent and effective. He seemed as if he could not be anything but eloquent. Perhaps, judged in this way, he never had an equal in the English Parliament. Neither Pitt nor Fox ever made so many speeches combining so many great qualities. Chatham was a great actor rather than a great orator. Burke was the greatest political essayist who ever addressed the House of Commons. Canning did not often rise above the level of burnished rhetorical commonplace. Macaulay, who during his time drew the most crowded houses of any speaker, not even excepting Peel, was not an orator in the true sense. Probably no one, past or present, had in combination so many gifts of voice, manner, fluency and argument, style, reason and passion, as Mr. Gladstone.

The House of Commons was his ground. There he was himself; there he was always seen to the best advantage. As a rule, he was not so successful on the platform. His turn of mind did not fit him well for the work of addressing great public meetings. He loved to look too carefully at every side of a question, and did not always go so quickly to the heart of it as would suit great popular audiences. The principal defect of his mind was probably a lack of simplicity, a tendency to over-refining and supersubtle argument. Not perhaps unnaturally, however, when he did, during some of the later passages of his career, lay himself out for the work of addressing popular audiences, he threw away all discrimination, and gave loose to the full force with which, under the excitement of great pressure, he was wont to rush at a principle. There seemed a certain lack of balance in his mind; a want of the exact poise of all his faculties. Either he must refine too much or he did not refine at all. Thus he became accused, and with some reason, of over-refining and all but quibbling in some of his Parliamentary arguments; of looking at all sides of a question so carefully that it was too long in doubt whether he was ever going to form any opinion of his own; and he was sometimes accused with equal justice of pleading one side of a political cause before great meetings of his countrymen with all the passionate blindness of a partisan. The accusations might seem self-contradictory, if we did not remember that they will apply, and with great force and justice, to Burke. Burke cut blocks with a razor, and went on refining to an impatient House of Commons, only eager for its dinner; and the same Burke threw himself into antagonism to the French Revolution as if he were the wildest of partisans; as if the question had but one side, and only fools or villains could possibly say it had any other.

Mr. Gladstone grew slowly into Liberal convictions. At the time when he joined the Coalition Ministry he was still regarded as one who had scarcely left the camp of Toryism, and who had only joined that Ministry because it was a coalition. Years after he was applied to by the late Lord Derby to join a Ministry formed by him; and it was not supposed that there was anything unreasonable in the proposition. The first impulse towards Liberal principles was given to his mind probably by his change with his leader from Protection to Free Trade. When a man like Gladstone saw that his traditional principles and those of his party had broken down in any one direction, it was but natural that he should begin to question their endurance in other directions. The whole fabric of belief was built up together. Gladstone's was a mind of that order that sees a principle in everything, and must, to adopt the phrase of a great preacher, make the ploughing as much a part of religious duty as the praying. The interests of religion seemed to him bound up with the creed of Conservatism; the principles of Protection must probably at one time have seemed a part of the whole creed of which one article was as sacred as another. His intellect and his principles, however, found themselves compelled to follow the guidance of his leader in the matter of Free Trade; and when inquiry thus began it was not very likely soon to stop. He must have seen how much the working of such a principle as that of Protection became a class interest in England, and how impossible it would have been for it to continue long in existence under an extended and a popular suffrage. In other countries the fallacy of Protection did not show itself so glaringly in the eyes of the poorer classes, for in other countries it was not the staple food of the population that became the principal object of a protective duty. But in England the bread on which the poorest had to live was made to pay a tax for the benefit of landlords and farmers. As long as one believed this to be a necessary condition of a great unquestionable creed, it was easy for a young statesman to reconcile himself to it. It might bear cruelly on individuals, or even multitudes; but so would the law of gravitation, as Mill has remarked, bear harshly on the best of men when it dashed him down from a height and broke his bones. It would be idle to question the existence of the law on that account; or to disbelieve the whole teaching of the physical science which explains its movements. But when Mr. Gladstone came to be convinced that there was no such law as the Protection principle at all; that it was a mere sham; that to believe in it was to be guilty of an economic heresy—then it was impossible for him not to begin questioning the genuineness of the whole system of political thought of which it formed but a part. Perhaps, too, he was impelled towards Liberal principles at home by seeing what

the effects of opposite doctrines had been abroad. He rendered memorable service to the Liberal cause of Europe by his eloquent protest against the brutal treatment of Baron Poerio and other Liberals of Naples who were imprisoned by the Neapolitan king—a protest which Garibaldi declared to have sounded the first trumpet-call of Italian liberty. In rendering service to Liberalism and to Europe he rendered service also to his own intelligence. He helped to set free his own spirit as well as the Neapolitan people. We find him, as his career goes on, dropping the traditions of his youth, always rising higher in Liberalism, and not going back. One of the foremost of his compeers, and his only actual rival in popular eloquence, eulogised him as always struggling towards the light. The common taunts addressed to public men who have changed their opinions were hardly ever applied to him. Even his enemies felt that the one idea always inspired him—a conscientious anxiety to do the right thing. None accused him of being one of the politicians who mistake, as Victor Hugo says, a weathercock for a flag. With many qualities which seemed hardly suited to a practical politician; with a sensitive and eager temper, like that of Canning, and a turn for theological argument that as a rule Englishmen do not love in a statesman; with an impetuosity that often carried him far astray, and a deficiency of those genial social qualities that go so far to make a public success in England, Mr. Gladstone maintained through the whole of his career a reputation against which there was hardly a serious cavil. The worst thing that was said of him was that he was too impulsive, and that his intelligence was too restless. He was an essayist, a critic, a Homeric scholar; a *dilettante* in art, music, and old china; he was a theological controversialist; he was a political economist, a financier, a practical administrator whose gift of mastering details has hardly ever been equalled; he was a statesman and an orator. No man could attempt so many things and not occasionally make himself the subject of a sneer. The intense gravity and earnestness of Gladstone's mind always, however, saved him from the special penalty of such versatility; no satirist described him as not one, but all mankind's epitome.

As yet, however, he is only the young statesman who was the other day the hope of the more solemn and solid Conversatives, and in whom they have not even yet entirely ceased to put some faith. The Coalition Ministry was so formed that it was not supposed a man necessarily nailed his colours to any mast when he joined it. More than one of Gladstone's earliest friends and political associates had a part in it. The Ministry might undoubtedly be called an Administration of All the Talents. Except the late Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli, it included almost every man of real ability who belonged to either of the two great parties of the

State. The Manchester school had, of course, no place there; but they were not likely just yet to be recognised as constituting one of the elements out of which even a Coalition Ministry might be composed.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE EASTERN QUESTION.

For forty years England had been at peace. There had indeed been little wars here and there with some of her Asiatic and African neighbours; and once or twice, as in the instance of the quarrel between Turkey and Egypt, she had been menaced for a moment with a dispute of a more formidable kind and nearer home. But the trouble had passed away, and from Waterloo downward England had known no real war. The new generation were growing up in a kind of happy belief that wars were things of the past for us; out of fashion; belonging to a ruder and less rational society, like the wearing of armour and the carrying of weapons in the civil streets. It is not surprising if it seemed possible to many that the England of the future might regard the instruments and the ways of war with the same curious wonder as that which Virgil assumes would one day fill the minds of the rustic labourers whose ploughs turned up on some field of ancient battle the rusted swords and battered helmets of forgotten warriors. During all the convulsions of the Continent, England had remained undisturbed. When bloody revolutions were storming through other capitals, London was smiling over the dispersion of the Chartists by a few special constables. When the armies of Austria, of Russia, of France, of Sardinia were scattered over vast and various continental battle-grounds, our troops were passing in peaceful pageantry of review before the well-pleased eyes of their Sovereign in some stately royal park. A new school as well as a new generation had sprung up. This school, full of faith but full of practical shrewd logic as well, was teaching with great eloquence and effect that the practice of settling international controversy by the sword was costly, barbarous, and blundering as well as wicked. The practice of the duel in England had utterly gone out. Battle was for ever out of fashion as a means of settling private controversy in England. Why then should it be unreasonable to believe that the like practice among nations might soon become equally obsolete?

Such certainly was the faith of a great many intelligent persons at the time when the Coalition Ministry was formed. The majority tacitly acquiesced in the belief without thinking much about it. They had never

in their time seen England engaged in European war; and it was natural to assume that what they had never seen they were never likely to see. Anyone who retraces attentively the history of English public opinion at that time will easily find evidence enough of a commonly accepted understanding that England had done with great wars. Even then perhaps a shrewd observer might have been inclined to conjecture that by the very force of reaction a change would soon set in. Man, said Lord Palmerston, is by nature a fighting and quarrelling animal. This was one of those smart saucy generalisations characteristic of its author, and which used to provoke many graver and more philosophic persons; but which nevertheless often got at the heart of a question in a rough and ready sort of way. In the season of which we are now speaking, it was not, however, the common belief that man was by nature a fighting and a quarrelling animal—at least in England. Bad government, the arbitrary power of an aristocracy, the necessity of finding occupation for a standing army, the ambitions of princes, the misguiding lessons of romance and poetry: these and other influences had converted man into an instrument of war. Leave him to his own impulses, his own nature, his own idea of self-interest, and the better teachings of wiser guides, and he is sure to remain in the paths of peace. Such was the common belief of the year or two after the Great Exhibition—the belief fervently preached by a few and accepted without contradiction by the majority, as most common beliefs are—the belief floating in the air of the time, and becoming part of the atmosphere in which the generation was brought up. Suddenly all this happy quiet faith was disturbed, and the long peace, which the hero of Tennyson's 'Maud' says he thought no peace, was over and done. The hero of 'Maud' had, it will be observed, the advantage of explaining his convictions after the war had broken out. The name was indeed legion of those who, under the same conditions, discovered like him that they had never relished the long long peace, or believed in it much as a peace at all.

The Eastern Question it was that disturbed the dream of peace. The use of such phrases as 'the Eastern Question,' borrowed chiefly from the political vocabulary of France, is not in general to be commended; but we can in this instance find no more ready and convenient way of expressing clearly and precisely the meaning of the crisis which had arisen in Europe. It was strictly the Eastern 'question'—the question of what to do with the East of Europe. It was certain that things could not remain as they then were, and nothing else was certain. The Ottoman Power had been settled during many centuries in the South-east of Europe. It had come in there as a conqueror, and had remained there only as a conqueror occupies the ground his tents are covering. The Turk had many

of the strong qualities and even the virtues of a great warlike conqueror; but he had no capacity or care for the arts of peace. He never thought of assimilating himself to those whom he had conquered, or them to him. He disdained to learn anything from them; he did not care whether or no they learned anything from him. It has been well remarked, that of all the races who conquered Greeks, the Turks alone learned nothing from their gifted captives. Captive Greece conquered all the world except the Turks. They defied her. She could not teach them letters or arts, commerce or science. The Turks were not, as a rule, oppressive to the races that lived under them. They were not habitual persecutors of the faiths they deemed heretical. In this respect they often contrasted favourably with States that ought to have been able to show them a better example. In truth, the Turk for the most part was disposed to look with disdainful composure on what he considered the religious follies of the heretical races who did not believe in the Prophet. They were objects of his scornful pity rather than of his anger. Every now and then, indeed, some sudden fierce outburst of fanatical cruelty towards some of the subject sects horrified Europe, and reminded her that the conqueror who had settled himself down in her south-eastern corner was still a barbarian who had no right, or place in civilised life. But as a rule the Turk did not care enough about the races he ruled over to feel the impulses of the perverted fanaticism which would strive to scourge men into the faith itself believes needful to salvation.

At one time there can be little doubt that all the Powers of civilised Europe would gladly have seen the Turk driven out of our Continent. But the Turk was powerful for a long series of generations, and it seemed for a while rather a question whether he would not send the Europeans out of their own grounds. He was for centuries the great terror, the nightmare, of Western Europe. When he began to decay, and when his aggressive strength was practically all gone, it might have been thought that the Western Powers would then have managed somehow to get rid of him. But in the meantime the condition of Europe had greatly changed. No one not actually subject to the Turk was afraid of him any more; and other States had arisen strong for aggression. The uncertainties of these States as to the intentions of their neighbours and each other proved a better bulwark for the Turks than any warlike strength of their own could any longer have furnished. The growth of the great Russian empire was of itself enough to change the whole conditions of the problem.

Nothing in our times has been more remarkable than the sudden growth of Russia. The rise of the United States is not so wonderful; for the men who made the United States were civilized men; men of our own

race who might be expected to make a way for themselves anywhere, and who were, moreover, put by destiny in possession of a vast and splendid continent having all variety of climate and a limitless productiveness; and where they had no neighbours or rivals to molest them. But Russia was peopled by a race who even down to our own times remain in many respects little better than semi-barbarous; and she had enemies and obstacles on all sides. A few generations ago Russia was literally an inland State. She was shut up in the heart of Eastern Europe as if in a prison. The genius, the craft and the audacity of Peter the Great first broke the narrow bounds set to the Russia of his day and extended her frontier to the sea. He was followed after a reign or two by a woman of genius, daring, unscrupulousness, and profligacy equal to his own; the greatest woman probably who ever sat on a throne, Elizabeth of England not even excepted. Catherine the Second so ably followed the example of Peter the Great, that she extended the Russian frontier in directions which he had not had opportunity to stretch to. By the time her reign was done Russia was one of the Great Powers of Europe, entitled to enter into negotiations on a footing of equality with the proudest States of the Continent. Unlike Turkey, Russia had always shown a yearning after the latest development of science and of civilisation. There was something even of affectation, provoking the smiles of an older and more ingrained culture, in the efforts persistently made by Russia to put on the garments of Western civilisation. Catherine the Great, in especial, had set the example in this way. She invited Diderot to her court. She adorned her cabinet with a bust of Charles James Fox. While some of the personal habits of herself and of those who surrounded her at court would have seemed too rude and coarse for Esquimaux, and while she was putting down free opinion at home with a severity worthy only of some mediæval Asiatic potentate, she was always talking as though she were a disciple of Rousseau's ideas and a pupil of Chesterfield's manners. This may have seemed ridiculous enough sometimes; and even in our own days the contrast between the professions and the practices of Russia is a familiar subject of satire. But in nations at least the homage which imitation pays often wins for half-conscious hypocrisy as much success as earnest and sincere endeavour. A nation that tries to appear more civilised than it really is ends very often by becoming more civilised than its neighbours ever thought it likely to be.

The wars against Napoleon brought Russia into close alliance with England, Austria, Prussia, and other European States of old and advanced civilisation. Russia was, during one part of that great struggle, the leading spirit of the alliance against Napoleon. Her soldiers were seen in

Italy and in France, as well as in the East of Europe. The semi-savage State became in the eyes of Europe a power charged along with others with the protection of the conservative interests of the Continent. She was recognised as a valuable friend and a most formidable enemy. Gradually it became evident that she could be aggressive as well as conservative. In the war between Austria and Hungary, Russia intervened and conquered Austria's rebellious Hungarians for her. Russia had already earned the hatred of European Liberals by her share in the partition of Poland and her manner of dealing with the Poles. After a while it grew to be a fixed conviction in the mind of the Liberalism of Western Europe that Russia was the greatest obstacle then existing in civilisation to the spread of popular ideas. The Turk was comparatively harmless in that sense. He was well content now, so much had his ancient ambition shrunk and his ancient war spirit gone out, if his strong and restless neighbours would only let him alone. But he was brought at more than one point into especial collision with Russia. Many of the provinces he ruled over in European Turkey were of Sclavonian race and of the religion of the Greek Church. They were thus affined by a double tie to the Russian people, and therefore the manner in which Turkey dealt with those provinces was a constant source of dispute between Russia and her. The Russians are a profoundly religious people. No matter what one may think of their form of faith, no matter how he may sometimes observe that religious profession contrasts with the daily habits of life, yet he cannot but see that the Russian character is steeped in religious faith or fanaticism. To the Russian fanatic there was something intolerable in the thought of a Sclave population, professing the religion of the orthodox Church, being persecuted by the Turks. No Russian ruler could hope to be popular who ventured to show a disregard for the national sentiment on this subject. The Christian populations of Turkey were to the Russian sovereigns what the Germans of Schleswig-Holstein were to the great German princes of later years, an indirect charge to which they could not, if they would, profess any indifference. A German prince, in order to be popular, had to proclaim himself enthusiastic about the cause of Schleswig-Holstein; a Russian emperor could not be loved if he did not declare his undying resolve to be the protector of the Christian populations of Turkey. Much of this was probably sincere and single-minded on the part of the Russian people and most of the Russian politicians. But the other States of Europe began to suspect that mingled up with benign ideas of protecting the Christian populations of Turkey might be a desire to extend the frontier of Russia to the southward in a new direction. Europe had seen by what craft and what audacious enterprises Russia had managed to ex-

tend her empire to the sea in other quarters; it began to be commonly believed that her next object of ambition would be the possession of Constantinople and the Bosphorus. It was reported that a will of Peter the Great had left it as an injunction to his successors to turn all the efforts of their policy towards that object. The particular document which was believed to be a will of Peter the Great enjoined on all succeeding Russian sovereigns never to relax in the extension of their territory northward on the Baltic and southward on the Black Sea shores, and to encroach as far as possible in the direction of Constantinople and the Indies. 'To work out this, raise wars continually—at one time against Turkey, at another against Persia; make dockyards on the Black Sea; by degrees make yourselves masters of that sea as well as of the Baltic; hasten the decay of Persia, and penetrate to the Persian Gulf; establish, if possible, the ancient commerce of the East *viâ* Syria, and push on to the Indies, which are the *entrepôt* of the world. Once there you need not fear the gold of England.' We now know that the alleged will was not genuine; but there could be little doubt that the policy of Peter and of his great follower Catherine would have been in thorough harmony with such a project. It therefore seemed to be the natural business of other European Powers to see that the defects of the Ottoman Government, such as they were, should not be made an excuse for helping Russia to secure the objects of her special ambition. One great Power, above all the rest, had an interest in watching over every movement that threatened in any way to interfere with the highway to India; still more with her peaceful and secure possession of India herself. That Power, of course, was England. England, Russia, and Turkey were alike in one respect: they were all Asiatic as well as European Powers. But Turkey could never come into any manner of collision with the interests of England in the East. The days of Turkey's interfering with any great State were long over. Neither Russia nor England nor any other Power in Europe or Asia feared her any more. On the contrary, there seemed something like a natural antagonism between England and Russia in the East. The Russians were extending their frontier towards that of our Indian empire. They were showing in that quarter the same mixture of craft and audacity which had stood them in good stead in various parts of Europe. Our officers and diplomatic emissaries reported that they were continually confronted by the evidences of Russian intrigue in Central Asia. We have already seen how much influence the real or supposed intrigues of Russia had in directing our policy in Afghanistan. Doubtless there was some exaggeration and some panic in all the tales that were told of Russian intrigue. Sometimes the alarm spread by these tales conjured up a kind of Russian hobgoblin,

bewildering the minds of public servants and making even statesmen occasionally seem like affrighted children. The question that at present concerns us is not whether all the apprehensions of danger from Russia were just and reasonable, but whether as a matter of fact they did exist. They certainly counted for a great deal in determining the attitude of the English people towards both Turkey and Russia. It was in great measure out of these alarms that there grew up among certain statesmen and classes in this country the conviction that the maintenance of the integrity of the Turkish empire was part of the national duty of England.

It is not too much, therefore, to say that the States of Europe generally desired the maintenance of the Ottoman empire simply because it was believed that while Turkey held her place she was a barrier against vague dangers which it was not worth while encountering as long as they could possibly be averted. Sharply defined, the condition of things was this: Russia, by reason of her sympathy of religion or race with Turkey's Christian populations, was brought into chronic antagonism with Turkey; England, by reason of her Asiatic possessions, was kept in just the same state of antagonism to Russia. The position of England was trying and difficult. She felt herself compelled by the seeming necessity of her national interests to maintain the existence of a Power which on its own merits stood condemned, and for which, as a Power, no English statesman ever cared to say a word. The position of Russia had more plausibility about it. It sounded better when described in an official document or a popular appeal. Russia was the religious State which had made it her mission and her duty to protect the suffering Christians of Turkey. England, let her state her case no matter how carefully or frankly, could only affirm that her motive in opposing Russia was the protection of her own interests. One inconvenient result of this condition of things was that, here among English people, there was always a wide difference of opinion as to the national policy with regard to Russia and Turkey. Many public men of great ability and influence were of opinion that England had no right to uphold the Ottoman power because of any fancied danger that might come to us from its fall. It was the simple duty of England, they insisted, to be just and fear not. In private life, they contended, we should all abhor a man who assisted a ruffian to live in a house which he had only got into as a burglar, merely because there was a chance that the dispossession of the ruffian might enable his patron's rival in business to become the owner of the premises. The duty, they insisted, of a conscientious man is clear. He must not patronise a ruffian, whatever comes. Let what will happen, that he must not do. So it was, according to their argument, with national policy. We are not concerned in dis-

cussing this question just now; we are merely acknowledging a fact which came to be of material consequence when the crisis arose that threw England into sudden antagonism with Russia.

That crisis came about during the later years of the reign of the Emperor Nicholas. He saw its opening, but not the close of even its first volume. Nicholas was a man of remarkable character. He had many of the ways of an Asiatic despot. He had a strong ambition, a fierce and fitful temper, a daring but sometimes too a vacillating will. He had many magnanimous and noble qualities, and moods of sweetness and gentleness. He reminded people sometimes of an Alexander the Great; sometimes of the 'Arabian Nights' version of Haroun Alraschid. A certain excitability ran through the temperament of all his house, which, in some of its members, broke into actual madness, and in others prevailed no farther than to lead to wild outbreaks of temper such as those that often convulsed the frame and distorted the character of a Charles the Bold or a Cœur de Lion. We cannot date the ways and characters of Nicholas's family from the years of Peter the Great. We must, for tolerably obvious reasons, be content to deduce their origin from the reign of Catherine II. The extraordinary and almost unparalleled conditions of the early married life of that much-injured, much-injuring woman, would easily account for any aberrations of intellect and will among her immediate descendants. Her son was a madman; there was madness or something very like it among the brothers of the Emperor Nicholas. The Emperor at one time was very popular in England. He had visited the Queen, and he had impressed every one by his noble presence, his lofty stature, his singular personal beauty, his blended dignity and familiarity of manner. He talked as if he had no higher ambition than to be in friendly alliance with England. When he wished to convey his impression of the highest degree of personal loyalty and honour, he always spoke of the word of an English gentleman. There can, indeed, be little doubt that the Emperor was sincerely anxious to keep on terms of cordial friendship with England, and, what is more, had no idea until the very last that the way he was walking was one which England could not consent to tread. His brother and predecessor had been in close alliance with England; his own ideal hero was the Duke of Wellington; he had made up his mind that when the division of the spoils of Turkey came about, England and he could best consult for their own interests and the peace of the world by making the appropriation a matter of joint arrangement.

We do not often in history find a great despot explaining in advance and in frank words a general policy like that which the Emperor Nicholas cherished with regard to Turkey. We are usually left to infer his schemes

from his acts. Not uncommonly we have to set his acts and the fair inferences from them against his own positive and repeated assurances. But in the case of the Emperor Nicholas we are left in no such doubt. He told England exactly what he proposed to do. He told the story twice over; more than that, he consigned it to writing for our clearer understanding. When he visited England in 1844, for the second time, Nicholas had several conversations with the Duke of Wellington and with Lord Aberdeen, then Foreign Secretary, about Turkey and her prospects, and what would be likely to happen in the event of her dissolution, which he believed to be imminent. When he returned to Russia he had a memorandum drawn up by Count Nesselrode, his Chancellor, embodying the views which, according to Nicholas's impressions, were entertained alike by him and by the British statesmen with whom he had been conversing. Mr. Kinglake says that he sent this document to England with the view of covering his retreat, having met with no encouragement from the English statesmen. Our idea of the matter is different. It may be taken for granted that the English statesmen did not give Nicholas any encouragement, or at least that they did not intend to do so; but it seems clear to us that he believed they had done so. The memorandum drawn up by Count Nesselrode is much more like a formal reminder or record of a general and oral engagement than a withdrawal from a proposal which was evidently not likely to be accepted. The memorandum set forth that Russia and England were alike penetrated by the conviction that it was for their common interest that the Ottoman empire should maintain itself in its existing independence and extent of territory, and that they had an equal interest in averting all the dangers that might place its safety in jeopardy. With this object, the memorandum declared, the essential point was to suffer the Porte to live in repose without needlessly disturbing it by diplomatic bickering. Turkey, however, had a habit of constantly breaking her engagements; and the memorandum insisted strongly that while she kept up this practice it was impossible for her integrity to be secure; and this practice of hers was indulged in because she believed she might do so with impunity, reckoning on the mutual jealousies of the Cabinets, and thinking that if she failed in her engagements towards one of them, the rest would espouse her cause. 'As soon as the Porte shall perceive that it is not supported by the other Cabinets, it will give way, and the differences which have arisen will be arranged in a conciliatory manner, without any conflict resulting from them.' The memorandum spoke of the imperative necessity of Turkey being led to treat her Christian subjects with toleration and mildness. On such conditions it was laid down that England and Russia must alike desire her preservation; but

the document proceeded to say that, nevertheless, these States could not conceal from themselves the fact that the Ottoman empire contained within itself many elements of dissolution, and that unforeseen events might at any time hasten its fall. 'In the uncertainty which hovers over the future a single fundamental idea seems to admit of a really practical application; that is, that the danger which may result from a catastrophe in Turkey will be much diminished if in the event of its occurring Russia and England have come to an understanding as to the course to be taken by them in common. That understanding will be the more beneficial inasmuch as it will have the full assent of Austria, between whom and Russia there already exists an entire accord.' This document was sent to London and kept in the archives of the Foreign Office. It was only produced and made public when, at a much later day, the Russian press began to insist that the English Government had always been in possession of the views of Russia in regard to Turkey. It seems to us evident that the Emperor of Russia really believed that his views were shared by English statesmen. The mere fact that his memorandum was received and retained in the English Foreign Office might well of itself tend to make Nicholas assume that its principles were recognised by the English Government as the basis of a common action, or at least a common understanding, between England and Russia. Nothing is more easy than to allow a fanatic or a man of one idea to suppose that those to whom he explains his views are convinced by him and in agreement with him. It is only necessary to listen and say nothing. Therefore, it is to be regretted that the English statesmen should have listened to Nicholas without saying something very distinct to show that they were not admitting or accepting any combination of purpose; or that they should have received his memorandum without some distinct disclaimer of their being in any way bound by its terms. Some of the statements in the memorandum were at the least sufficiently remarkable to have called for comment of some kind from the English statesmen who received it. For example, the Emperor of Russia professed to have in his hands not alone the policy of Russia, but that of Austria as well. He spoke for Austria, and he stated that he understood himself to be speaking for England too. Accordingly, England, Austria, and Russia were, in his understanding, entering into a secret conspiracy among themselves for the disposal of the territory of a friendly Power in the event of that Power getting into difficulties. This might surely be thought by the English statesmen to bear an ominous and painful resemblance to the kind of *pourparlers* that were going on between Russia, Prussia, and Austria before the partition of Poland, and might well have seemed to call for a strong and unmistakable repudiation on the part of England. We could

scarcely have been too emphatic or too precise in conveying to the Emperor of Russia our determination to have nothing to do with any such conspiracy.

Time went on, and the Emperor thought he saw an occasion for still more clearly explaining his plans and for reviving the supposed understanding with England. Lord Aberdeen came into office as Prime Minister of this country; Lord Aberdeen who was Foreign Secretary when Nicholas was in England in 1844. On January 9, 1853, before the re-elections which were consequent upon the new ministerial appointments had yet taken place, the Emperor met our minister, Sir G. Hamilton Seymour, at a party given by the Archduchess Helen, at her palace in St. Petersburg, and he drew him aside and began to talk with him in the most outspoken manner about the future of Turkey and the arrangements it might be necessary for England and Russia to make regarding it. The conversation was renewed again and again afterwards. Few conversations have had greater fame than these. One phrase which the Emperor employed has passed into the familiar political language of the world. As long as there is memory of an Ottoman empire in Europe, so long the Turkey of the days before the Crimean War will be called 'the sick man.' 'We have on our hands,' said the Emperor, 'a sick man—a very sick man; it will be a great misfortune if one of these days he should slip away from us before the necessary arrangements have been made.' The conversations all tended towards the one purpose. The Emperor urged that England and Russia ought to make arrangements beforehand as to the inheritance of the Ottoman in Europe—before what he regarded as the approaching and inevitable day when the sick man must come to die. The Emperor explained that he did not contemplate nor would he allow a permanent occupation of Constantinople by Russia; nor, on the other hand, would he consent to see that city held by England or France or any other great Power. He would not listen to any plans for the reconstruction of Greece in the form of a Byzantine empire, nor would he allow Turkey to be split up into little republics—asylums, as he said, for the Kossuths and Mazzinis of Europe. It was not made very clear what the Emperor wished to have done with Constantinople, if it was not to be Russian, nor Turkish, nor English, nor French, nor Greek, nor yet a little republic; but it was evident, at all events, that Nicholas had made up his mind as to what it was not to be. He thought that Servia and Bulgaria might become independent States; that is to say, independent States, such as he considered the Danubian Principalities then to be, 'under my protection.' If the reorganisation of South-Eastern Europe made it seem necessary to England that she should take possession of Egypt, the Emperor said he

should offer no objection. He said the same thing of Candia: if England desired to have that island, he saw no objection. He did not ask for any formal treaty, he said; indeed, such arrangements as that are not generally consigned to formal treaties; he only wished for such an understanding as might be come to among gentlemen, and he was satisfied that if he had ten minutes' conversation with Lord Aberdeen the thing could be easily settled. If only England and Russia could arrive at an understanding on the subject, he declared that it was a matter of indifference to him what other Powers might think or say. He spoke of the several millions of Christians in Turkey whose rights he was called upon to watch over, and he remarked—the remark is of significance—that the right of watching ver them was secured to him by treaty.

The Emperor was evidently under the impression that the interests of England and of Russia were united in this proposed transaction. He had no idea of anything but the most perfect frankness so far as we were concerned. It clearly had not occurred to him to suspect that there could be anything dishonourable, anything England might recoil from, in the suggestion that the two Powers ought to enter into a plot to divide the sick man's goods between them while the breath was yet in the sick man's body. It did not even occur to him that there could be anything dishonourable in entering into such a compact without the knowledge of any other of the great European Powers. The Emperor desired to act like a man of honour; but the idea of Western honour was as yet new to Russia, and it had not quite got possession of the mind of Nicholas. He was like the savage who is ambitious of learning the ways of civilisation, and who may be counted on to do whatever he knows to be in accordance with these ways, but who is constantly liable to make a mistake simply from not knowing how to apply them in each new emergency. The very consequences which came from Nicholas's confidential communications with our minister would of themselves testify to his sincerity, and in a certain sense to his simplicity. But the English Government never after the disclosures of Sir Hamilton Seymour put any faith in Nicholas. They regarded him as nothing better than a plotter. They did not probably even make allowance enough for the degree of religious or superstitious fervour which accompanied and qualified all his ambition and his craft. Human nature is so oddly blent that we ought not to be surprised if we find a very high degree of fanatical and sincere fervour in company with a crafty selfishness. The English Government and most of the English people ever after looked on Nicholas as a determined plotter and plunderer, who was not to be made an associate in any engagement. On the other hand, Nicholas was as much disappointed as an honest highwayman of the days of Captain Macheath might have

been who, on making a handsome offer of a share in a new enterprise to a trusted and familiar 'pal,' finds that the latter is taken with a fit of virtuous indignation and is hurrying off to Bow Street to tell the whole story.

The English Minister and the English Government could only answer the Emperor's overtures by saying that they did not think it quite usual to enter into arrangements for the spoliation of a friendly Power, and that England had no desire to succeed to any of the possessions of Turkey. The Emperor doubtless did not believe these assurances. He probably felt convinced that England had some game of her own in hand into which she did not find it convenient to admit him on terms of partnership. He must have felt bitterly annoyed at the thought that he had committed himself so far for nothing. The communications were of course understood to be strictly confidential; and Nicholas had no fear that they would be given to the public at that time. They were in fact not made publicly known for more than a year after. But Nicholas had the dissatisfaction of knowing that her Majesty's ministers were now in possession of his designs. He had the additional discomfort of believing that while he had shown his hand to them, they had contrived to keep whatever designs of their own they were preparing a complete secret from him. One unfortunate admission, the significance of which will be seen hereafter, was made on the part of the English Government during the correspondence caused by the conversation between the Emperor and Sir Hamilton Seymour. It was Lord John Russell who, inadvertently, no doubt, made this admission. In his letter to Sir Hamilton Seymour on February 9, 1853, he wound up with the words, 'The more the Turkish Government adopts the rules of impartial law and equal administration, the less will the Emperor of Russia find it necessary to apply that exceptional protection which his Imperial Majesty has found so burthensome and inconvenient, though no doubt prescribed by duty and sanctioned by treaty.'

These conversations with Sir Hamilton Seymour formed but an episode in the history of the events that were then going on. It was an episode of great importance, even to the immediate progress of the events, and it had much to do with the turn they took towards war; but there were great forces moving towards antagonism in the South-East of Europe that must in any case have come into collision. Russia, with her ambitions, her tendency to enlarge her frontier on all sides, and her natural sympathies of race and religion with the Christian and Sclave populations under Turkish rule, must before long have come into active hostility with the Porte. Even at the present somewhat critical time we are not under any necessity to persuade ourselves that Russia was actuated in the movements

she made by merely selfish ambition, and nothing else; that all the wrong was on her side of the quarrel, and all the right upon ours. It may be conceded without any abrogation of patriotic English sentiment, that, in standing up for the populations so closely affined to her in race and religion, Russia was acting very much as England would have acted under similar circumstances. If we can imagine a number of English and Christian populations under the sway of some Asiatic despot on the frontiers of our Indian empire, we shall admit that it is likely the sentiments of all Englishmen in India would be extremely sensitive on their behalf, and that it would not be difficult to get us to believe that we were called upon to interfere for their protection. Certainly, anyone who should try to persuade us that, after all, these Englishmen were nearly as well off under the Asiatic and despotic rule as many other people, or as they deserved to be, would not have much chance of a patient hearing from us.

The Russian Emperor fell back a little after the failure of his efforts with Sir Hamilton Seymour, and for a while seemed to agree with the English Government as to the necessity of not embarrassing Turkey by pressing too severely upon her. He was no doubt seriously disappointed when he found that England would not go with him; and his calculations were put out by the discovery. He therefore saw himself compelled to act with a certain moderation while feeling his way to some other mode of attack. But the natural forces which were in operation did not depend on the will of any empire or government for their tendency. Nicholas would have had to move in any case. There is really no such thing in modern politics as a genuine autocrat. Nicholas of Russia could no more afford to overlook the evidences of popular and national feeling among his people than an English sovereign could. He was a despot by virtue of the national will which he embodied. The national will was in decided antagonism to the tendencies of the Ottoman power in Europe; and afterwards to the policy which the English Government felt themselves compelled to adopt for the support of that power against the schemes of the Emperor of Russia.

There had long been going on a dispute about the Holy Places in Palestine. The claims of the Greek Church and those of the Latin Church were in antagonism there. The Emperor of Russia was the protector of the Greek Church; the Kings of France had long had the Latin Church under their protection. France had never taken our views as to the necessity of maintaining the Ottoman power in Europe. On the contrary, as we have seen, the policy of England and that of France were so decidedly opposed at the time when France favoured the independence of Egypt, and England would not hear of it, that the two countries very nearly came to war.

Nor did France really feel any very profound sympathy with the pretensions which the Latin monks were constantly making in regard to the Holy Places. There was unquestionably downright religious fanaticism on the part of Russia to back up the demands of the Greek Church; but we can hardly believe that opinion in France or in the cabinets of French Ministers really concerned itself much about the Latin monks except in so far as political purposes might be subserved by paying some attention to them. But it happened somewhat unfortunately that the French Government began to be unusually active in pushing the Latin claims just then. The whole dispute on which the fortunes of Europe seemed for a while to depend was of a strangely mediæval character. The Holy Places to which the Latins raised a claim were the great Church in Bethlehem; the Sanctuary of the Nativity, with the right to place a new star there (that which formerly ornamented it having been lost); the tomb of the Virgin; the Stone of Anointing; the Seven Arches of the Virgin in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In the reign of that remarkably pious, truthful, and virtuous monarch, Francis the First of France, a treaty was made with the Sultan by which France was acknowledged the protector of the Holy Places in Palestine, and of the monks of the Latin Church who took on themselves the care of the sacred monuments and memorials. But the Greek Church afterwards obtained firmans from the Sultan; each Sultan gave away privileges very much as it pleased him, and without taking much thought of the manner in which his firman might affect the treaties of his predecessors; and the Greeks claimed on the strength of these concessions that they had as good a right as the Latins to take care of the Holy Places. Disputes were always arising, and of course these were aggravated by the fact that France was supposed to be concerned in the protection of one set of disputants and Russia in that of another. The French and the Russian Governments did, in point of fact, interfere from time to time for the purpose of making good their claims. The claims at length came to be identified with the States which respectively protected them. An advantage of the smallest kind gained by the Latins was viewed as an insult to Russia; a concession to the Greeks was a snub to France. The subject of controversy seemed trivial and odd in itself. But it had even in itself a profounder significance than many a question of diplomatic etiquette which has led great States to the verge of war, or into war itself. Mr. Kinglake, whose brilliant history of the Invasion of the Crimea is too often disfigured by passages of solemn and pompous monotony, has superfluously devoted several eloquent pages to prove that the sacredness of association attaching to some particular spot has its roots in the very soil of human nature. The custody of the Holy Places was in this instance

a symbol of a religious inheritance to the monastic disputants, and of political power to the diplomatists.

It was France which first stirred the controversy in the time just before the Crimean War. The fact is beyond dispute. Lord John Russell had hardly come into office when he had to observe in writing to Lord Cowley, our ambassador in Paris, that 'her Majesty's Government cannot avoid perceiving that the ambassador of France at Constantinople was the first to disturb the *status quo* in which the matter rested.' 'Not,' Lord John Russell went on to say, 'that the disputes of the Latin and Greek Churches were not very active, but without some political action on the part of France those quarrels would never have troubled the relations of friendly Powers.' Lord John Russell also complained that the French ambassador was the first to speak of having recourse to force and to threaten the intervention of a French fleet. 'I regret to say,' the despatch continued, 'that this evil example has been partly followed by Russia.' The French Government were indeed unusually active at that time. The French ambassador, M. de Lavalette, is said to have threatened that a French fleet should appear off Jaffa, and even hinted at a French occupation of Jerusalem, 'when,' as he significantly put it, 'we should have all the sanctuaries.' One French army occupying Rome and another occupying Jerusalem would have left the world in no doubt as to the supremacy of France. The cause of all this energy is not far to seek. The Prince President had only just succeeded in procuring himself to be installed as Emperor; and he was very anxious to distract the attention of Frenchmen from domestic politics to some showy and startling policy abroad. He was in quest of a policy of adventure. This controversy between the Church of the East and the Church of the West tempted him into activity, as one that seemed likely enough to give him an opportunity of displaying the power of France and of the new system without any very great danger or responsibility. Technically, therefore, we are entitled to lay the blame of disturbing the peace of Europe in the first instance on the Emperor of the French. But while we must condemn the restless and self-interested spirit which thus set itself to stir up disturbance, we cannot help seeing that the quarrel must have come at some time, even if the *plébiscite* had never been invited, and a new Emperor had never been placed upon the throne of France. The Emperor of Russia had made up his mind that the time had come to divide the property of the sick man, and he was not likely to remain long without an opportunity of quarrelling with anyone who stood at the side of the sick man's bed, and seemed to constitute himself a protector of the sick man's interests.

The key of the whole controversy out of which the Eastern war arose

and out of which indeed all subsequent complications in the East came as well, was said to be found in a clause of the treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji. During the negotiations for peace that took place in Vienna while the Crimean War was yet going on, the assembled plenipotentiaries declared that the whole dispute was owing to a misinterpretation of a clause in this unfortunate treaty. In a time much nearer to our own, the discussion on the same clause in the same treaty was renewed with all the old earnestness; and with the same difference of interpretation. It may not perhaps give an initiated reader any very exalted opinion of the utility and beauty of diplomatic arrangements, to hear that disputes covering more than a century of time, and causing at least two great wars, arose out of the impossibility of reconciling two different interpretations of the meaning of two or three lines of a treaty. The American civil war was said with much justice to have been fought to obtain a definition of the limits of the rights of the separate States as laid down in the constitution; the Crimean War was apparently fought to obtain a satisfactory and final definition of the seventh clause of the Treaty of Kainardji; and it did not fulfil its purpose. The historic value therefore of this seventh clause may in one sense be considered greater than that of the famous disputed words which provoked the censure of the Jansenists and the immortal letters of Pascal.

The Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji was made in 1774, between the Ottoman Porte and Catherine II. of Russia. On sea and land the arms of the Great Empress had been victorious. Turkey was beaten to her knees. She had to give up Azof and Taganrog to Russia, and to declare the Crimea independent of the Ottoman empire; an event which it is almost needless to say was followed not many years after by the Russians taking the Crimea for themselves and making it a province of Catherine's empire. The Treaty of Kainardji, as it is usually called, was that which made the arrangements for peace. When it exacted from Turkey such heavy penalties in the shape of cession of territory, it was hardly supposed that one seemingly insignificant clause was destined to threaten the very existence of the Turkish empire. The Treaty bore date July 10, 1774; and it was made, so to speak, in the tent of the victor. The seventh clause declared that the Sublime Porte promised 'to protect constantly the Christian religion and its churches; and also to allow the minister of the Imperial Court of Russia to make on all occasions representations as well in favour of the new church in Constantinople, of which mention will be made in the fourteenth article, as in favour of those who officiate therein, promising to take such representations into due consideration as being made by a confidential functionary of a neighbouring and sincerely friendly Power.' Not much possibility of misunderstanding about these words, one might feel inclined to say. We turn then

to the fourteenth article alluded to, in order to discover if in its wording lies the perplexity of meaning which led to such momentous and calamitous results. We find that by this article it is simply permitted to the Court of Russia to build a public church of the Greek rite in the Galata quarter of Constantinople, in addition to the chapel built in the house of the minister; and it is declared that the new church 'shall be always under the protection of the ministers of the (Russian) empire, and shielded from all obstruction and all damage.' Here, then, we seem to have two clauses of the simplest meaning and by no means of first-class importance. The latter clause allows Russia to build a new church in Constantinople; the former allows the Russian minister to make representations to the Porte on behalf of the church and of those who officiate in it. What difference of opinion, it may be asked, could possibly arise? The difference was this: Russia claimed a right of protectorate over all the Christians of the Greek Church in Turkey as the consequence of the seventh clause of the treaty. She insisted that when Turkey gave her a right to interfere on behalf of the worshippers in one particular church, the same right extended so far as to cover all the worshippers of the same denomination in every part of the Ottoman dominions. The great object of Russia throughout all the negotiations that preceded the Crimean War was to obtain from the Porte an admission of the existence of such a protectorate. Such an acknowledgment would, in fact, have made the Emperor of Russia the patron and all but the ruler of by far the larger proportion of the populations of European Turkey. The Sultan would no longer have been master in his own dominions. The Greek Christians would naturally have regarded the Russian Emperor's right of intervention on their behalf as constituting a protectorate far more powerful than the nominal rule of the Sultan. They would have known that the ultimate decision of any dispute in which they were concerned rested with the Emperor, and not with the Sultan; and they would soon have come to look upon the Emperor, and not the Sultan, as their actual sovereign.

Now it does not seem likely on the face of things that any ruler of a State would have consented to hand over to a more powerful foreign monarch such a right over the great majority of his subjects. Still, if Turkey, driven to her last defences, had no alternative but to make such a concession, the Emperors of Russia could not be blamed for insisting that it should be carried out. The terms of the article in the treaty itself certainly do not seem to admit of such a construction. But for the views always advocated by Mr. Gladstone, we should say it was self-evident that the article never had any such meaning. We cannot, however, dismiss the argument of such a man as Mr. Gladstone as if it were un-

worthy of consideration, or say that an interpretation is obviously erroneous which he has deliberately and often declared to be accurate. We may as well mention here at once that Mr. Gladstone rests his argument on the first line of the famous article. The promise of the Sultan, he contends, to protect constantly the Christian religion and its churches is an engagement distinct in itself, and disconnected from the engagement that follows in the same clause, and which refers to the new building and its ministrants. The Sultan engages to protect the Christian churches; and with whom does he enter into this engagement? With the Sovereign of Russia. Why does he make this engagement? Because he has been defeated by Russia and compelled to accept terms of peace; and one of the conditions on which he is admitted to peace is his making this engagement. How does he make the engagement? By an article in a treaty agreed to between him and the Sovereign of Russia. But if a State enters into treaty engagement with another that it will do a certain thing, it is clear that the other State must have a special right of remonstrance and of representation if the thing be not done. Therefore Mr. Gladstone argues that as the Sultan made a special treaty with Russia to protect the Christians, he gave in the very nature of things a special right to Russia to complain if the protection was not given. We are far from denying that there is force in the argument; and it is at all events worthy of being recorded for its mere historical importance. But Mr. Gladstone's was certainly not the European interpretation of the clause; nor does it seem to us the interpretation that history will accept. Lord John Russell, as we have seen, made a somewhat unlucky admission that the claims of Russia to a protectorate were 'prescribed by duty and sanctioned by treaty.' But this admission seems rather to have been the result of inadvertence or heedlessness than of any deliberate intention to recognise the particular claim involved. The admission was afterwards made the occasion of many a severe attack upon Lord John Russell by Mr. Disraeli and other leading members of the Opposition. Assuredly Lord John Russell's admission, if it is really to be regarded as such, was not endorsed by the English Government. Whenever we find Russia putting the claim into plain words, we find England, through her ministers, refusing to give it their acknowledgment. During the discussions before the Crimean War, Lord Clarendon, our Foreign Secretary, wrote to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe a letter embodying the views of the English Government on the claim. No sovereign, Lord Clarendon says, having a due regard for his own dignity and independence, could admit proposals which conferred upon a foreign and more powerful sovereign a right of protection over his own subjects. 'If such a concession were made, the result,' as Lord Clarendon pointed out, 'would be that

fourteen millions of Greeks would henceforward regard the Emperor as their supreme protector, and their allegiance to the Sultan would be little more than nominal, while his own independence would dwindle into vassalage.' Diplomacy, therefore, was powerless to do good during all the protracted negotiations that set in, for the plain reason that the only object of the Emperor of Russia in entering upon negotiation at all was one which the other European Powers regarded as absolutely inadmissible.

The dispute about the Holy Places was easily settled. The Porte cared very little about the matter, and was willing enough to come to any fair terms by which the whole controversy could be got rid of. But the demands of Russia went on just as before. Prince Mentschikoff, a man of the Potemkin school, fierce, rough, and unable or unwilling to control his temper, was sent with demands to Constantinople; and his very manner of making the demands seemed as if it were taken up for the purpose of ensuring their rejection. If the envoy fairly represented the sovereign, the demands must have been so conveyed with the deliberate intention of immediately and irresistibly driving the Turks to reject every proposition coming from such a negotiator. Mentschikoff brought his proposals with him cut and dry in the form of a convention which he called upon Turkey to accept without more ado. In other words, he put a pistol at Turkey's head and told her to sign at once or else he would pull the trigger. Turkey refused, and Prince Mentschikoff withdrew in real or affected rage, and presently the Emperor Nicholas sent two divisions of his army across the Pruth to take possession of the Danubian principalities.

Diplomacy, however, did not give in even then. The Emperor announced that he had occupied the Principalities not as an act of war, but with the view of obtaining material guarantees for the concession of the demands which Turkey had already declared that she would not concede. The English Government advised the Porte not to treat the occupation as an act of war, although fully admitting that it was strictly a *casus belli*, and that Turkey would have been amply justified in meeting it by an armed resistance if it were prudent for her to do so. It would of course have been treated as war by any strong Power. We might well have retorted upon Russia the harsh but not wholly unjustifiable language she had employed towards us when we seized possession of material guarantees from the Greek Government in the harbour of Piræus. In our act, however, there was less of that which constitutes war than in the arbitrary conduct of Russia. Greece did not declare that our demands were such as she could not admit in principle. She did admit most of them in principle; but was only, as it seemed to our Government, or at least to Lord Palmerston, trying to evade an actual settlement. There was nothing to go to war about; and our seizure of the ships, objectionable as it was, might be

described as only a way of getting hold of a material guarantee for the discharge of a debt which was not in principle disputed. But in the dispute between Russia and Turkey the claim was rejected altogether; it was declared intolerable; its principle was absolutely repudiated, and any overt act on the part of Russia must therefore have had for its object to compel Turkey to submit to a demand which she would yield to force alone. This is of course in the very spirit of war; and if Turkey had been a stronger Power, she would never have dreamed of meeting it in any other way than by an armed resistance. She was, however, strongly advised by England and other Powers to adopt a moderate course; and, in fact, throughout the whole of the negotiations she showed a remarkable self-control and a dignified courtesy which must sometimes have been very vexing to her opponent. Diplomacy went to work again, and a Vienna note was concocted which Russia at once offered to accept. The four great Powers who were carrying on the business of mediation were at first quite charmed with the note, with the readiness of Russia to accept it, and with themselves; and but for the interposition of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe it seems highly probable that it would have been agreed to by all the parties concerned. Lord Stratford, however, saw plainly that the note was a virtual concession to Russia of all that she specially desired to have, and all that Europe was unwilling to concede to her. The great object of Russia was to obtain an acknowledgment, however vague or covert, of her protectorate over the Christians of the Greek Church in the Sultan's dominions; and the Vienna note was so constructed as to affirm much rather than to deny the claim which Russia had so long been setting up. Assuredly such a note could at some future time have been brought out in triumph by Russia as an overwhelming evidence of the European recognition of such a protectorate.

Let us make this a little more plain. Suppose the question at issue were as to the payment of a tribute claimed by one prince from another. The one had been always insisting that the other was his vassal, bound to pay him tribute; the other always repudiated the claim in principle. This was the subject of dispute. After a while the question is left to arbitration, and the arbitrators, without actually declaring in so many words that the claim to the tribute is established, yet go so far as to direct the payment of a certain sum of money, and do not introduce a single word to show that in their opinion the original claim was unjust in principle. Would not the claimant of the tribute be fully entitled in after years, if any new doubt of his claim were raised, to appeal to this arbitration as confirming it? Would he not be entitled to say, 'The dispute was about my right to tribute. Here is a document awarding to me the payment of

a certain sum, and not containing a word to show that the arbitrators disputed the principle of my claim. Is it possible to construe that otherwise than as a recognition of my claim?' We certainly cannot think it would have been otherwise regarded by any impartial mind. The very readiness with which Russia consented to accept the Vienna note ought to have taught its framers that Russia found all her account in its vague and ambiguous language. The Prince Consort said it was a trap laid by Russia through Austria; and it seems hardly possible to regard it now in any other light.

The Turkish Government, therefore, acting under the advice of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, our ambassador to Constantinople, who had returned to his post after a long absence, declined to accept the Vienna note unless with considerable modifications. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe showed great acuteness and force of character throughout all these negotiations. A reader of Mr. Kinglake's history is sometimes apt to become nauseated by the absurd pompousness with which the historian overlays his descriptions of 'the great Eltchi,' as he is pleased to call him, and is inclined to wish that the great Eltchi could have imparted some of his own sober gravity and severe simplicity of style to his adulator. Mr. Kinglake writes of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe as if he were describing the all-compelling movements of some divinity or providence. A devoted imperial historian would have made himself ridiculous by writing of the Great Napoleon at the height of his power in language of such inflated mysticism as this educated Englishman has allowed himself to employ when describing the manner in which our ambassador to Constantinople did his duty during the days before the Crimean War. But the extraordinary errors of taste and good sense into which Mr. Kinglake occasionally descends cannot prevent us from doing justice to the keen judgment and the inflexible will which Lord Stratford displayed during this critical time. He saw the fatal defect of the note, which, prepared in Paris, had been brought to its supposed perfection at Vienna, and had there received the adhesion of the English Government along with that of the governments of the other great Powers engaged in the conference. A hint from Lord Stratford made the Ministers of the Porte consider it with suspicious scrutiny, and they too saw its weakness and its conscious or unconscious treachery. They declared that unless certain modifications were introduced they would not accept the note. The reader will at first think perhaps that some of these modifications were mere splittings of hairs and diplomatic, worse even than lawyer-like, quibbles. But in truth the alterations demanded were of the greatest importance for Turkey. The Porte had to think, not of the immediate purpose of the note, but of the objects it might be made to serve afterwards. It contained, for instance, words which declared that

the Government of his Majesty the Sultan would remain 'faithful to the letter and the spirit of the stipulations of the Treaties of Kainardji and of Adrianople, relative to the protection of the Christian religion.' These words, in a note drawn up for the purpose of satisfying the Emperor of Russia, could not but be understood as recognising the interpretation of the Treaty of Kainardji on which Russia has always insisted. The Porte therefore proposed to strike out these words and substitute the following: 'To the stipulations of the Treaty of Kainardji, confirmed by that of Adrianople, relative to the protection by the Sublime Porte of the Christian religion.' By these words the Turkish ministers quietly affirm that the only protectorate exercised over the Christians of Turkey is that of the Sultan of Turkey himself. The difference is simply that between a claim conceded and a claim repudiated. The Russian Government refused to accept the modifications; and in arguing against them, the Russian minister, Count Nesselrode, made it clear to the English Government that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was right when he held the note to be full of weakness and of error. For the Russian minister argued against the modifications on the very ground that they denied to the claims of Russia just that satisfaction that the statesmanship and the public opinion of Europe had always agreed to refuse. The Prince Consort's expression was appropriate: the Western Powers had nearly been caught in a trap.

From that time all hopes of peace were over. There were, to be sure, other negotiations still. A ghastly semblance of faith in the possibility of a peaceful arrangement was kept up for a while on both sides. Little plans of adjustment were tinkered up and tried, and fell to pieces the moment they were tried. It is not necessary for us to describe them. Not many persons put any faith or even professed any interest in them. They were conducted amid the most energetic preparations for war on both sides. Our troops were moving towards Malta; the streets of London, of Liverpool, of Southampton, and other towns, were ringing with the cheers of enthusiastic crowds gathered together to watch the marching of troops destined for the East. Turkey had actually declared war against Russia. People now were anxious rather to see how the war would open between Russia and the allies than when it would open; the time when could evidently only be a question of a few days; the way how was a matter of more peculiar interest. We had known so little of war for nearly forty years, that added to all the other emotions which the coming of battle must bring was the mere feeling of curiosity as to the sensation produced by a state of war. It was an abstraction to the living generation—a thing to read of and discuss and make poetry and romance out of but they could not yet realise what itself was like.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### WHERE WAS LORD PALMERSTON?

MEANTIME where was Lord Palmerston? He of all men, one would think, must have been pleased with the turn things were taking. He had had from the beginning little faith in any issue of the negotiations but war. Probably he did not really wish for any other result. We are well inclined to agree with Mr. Kinglake that of all the members of the Cabinet he alone clearly saw his way and was satisfied with the prospect. But according to the supposed nature of his office he had now nothing to do with the war or with foreign affairs except as every member of the Cabinet shares the responsibilities of the whole body. He had apparently about as much to do with the war as the Postmaster-General, or the Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster, might have. He had accepted the office of Home Secretary; he had declared that he did not choose to be Foreign Secretary any more. He affirmed that he wanted to learn something about home affairs, and to get to understand his countrymen; and so forth. He was really very busy all this time in his new duties. Lord Palmerston was a remarkably efficient and successful Home Secretary. His unceasing activity loved to show itself in whatever department he might be called upon to occupy. He brought to the somewhat prosaic duties of his new office, not only all the virile energy, but also all the enterprise which he had formerly shown in managing revolutions and dictating to foreign courts. The ticket-of-leave system dates from the time of his administration. Our transportation system had broken down, for, in fact, the colonies would stand it no longer, and it fell to Lord Palmerston to find something to put in its place; and the plan of granting tickets-of-leave to convicts who had shown that they were capable of regeneration was the outcome of the necessity and of his administration. The measures to abate the smoke nuisance, by compelling factories under penalties to consume their own smoke, is also the offspring of Palmerston's activity in the Home Office. The Factory Acts were extended by him. He went energetically to work in the shutting up of graveyards in the metropolis; and in a letter to his brother he declared that he should like to 'put down beershops, and let shopkeepers sell beer like oil, and vinegar, and treacle, to be carried home and drunk with wives and children.'

This little project is worthy of notice because it illustrates more fairly perhaps than some far greater plan might do at once the strength and the weakness of Palmerston's intelligence. He could not see why everything

should not be done in a plain straightforward way, and why the arrangements that were good for the sale of one thing might not be good also for the sale of another. He did not stop to inquire whether, as a matter of fact, beer is a commodity at all like oil, and vinegar, and treacle; whether the same consequences follow the drinking of beer and the consumption of treacle. His critics said that he was apt to manage his foreign affairs on the same rough-and-ready principle. If a system suited England, why should it not suit all other places as well? If treacle may be sold safely without any manner of authoritative regulation, why not beer? The answer to the latter question is plain—because treacle is not beer. So, people said, with Palmerston's constitutional projects for every place. Why should not that which suits England suit also Spain? Because, to begin with, a good many people urged, Spain is not England.

There was one department of his duties in which Palmerston was acquiring a new and somewhat odd reputation. That was in his way of answering deputations and letters. 'The mere routine business of the Home Office,' Palmerston writes to his brother, 'as far as that consists in daily correspondence, is far lighter than that of the Foreign Office. But during a session of Parliament the whole time of the Secretary of State, up to the time when he must go to the House of Commons, is taken up by deputations of all kinds, and interviews with members of Parliament, militia colonels, etc.' Lord Palmerston was always civil and cordial; he was full of a peculiar kind of fresh common sense, and always ready to apply it to any subject whatever. He could at any time say some racy thing which set the public wondering and laughing. He gave something like a shock to the Presbytery of Edinburgh when they wrote to him through the Moderator to ask whether a national fast ought not to be appointed in consequence of the appearance of cholera. Lord Palmerston gravely admonished the Presbytery that the Maker of the universe had appointed certain laws of nature for the planet on which we live, and that the weal or woe of mankind depends on the observance of those laws,—one of them connecting health 'with the absence of those noxious exhalations which proceed from overcrowded human beings, or from decomposing substances whether animal or vegetable.' He therefore recommended that the purification of towns and cities should be more strenuously carried on, and remarked that the causes and sources of contagion, if allowed to remain, 'will infallibly breed pestilence and be fruitful in death, in spite of all the prayers and fastings of a united but inactive nation.' When Lord Stanley of Alderley applied to Lord Palmerston for a special permission for a deceased dignitary of a church to be buried under the roof of the sacred building, the Home Secretary declined to accede to the

request in a letter that might have come from, or might have delighted, Sydney Smith. 'What special connection is there between church dignities and the privilege of being decomposed under the feet of survivors? Do you seriously mean to imply that a soul is more likely to go to heaven because the body which it inhabited lies decomposing under the pavement of a church instead of being placed in a churchyard? . . . England is, I believe, the only country in which in these days people accumulate putrefying dead bodies amid the dwellings of the living; and as to burying bodies under thronged churches, you might as well put them under libraries, drawing-rooms, and dining-rooms.'

Lord Palmerston did not see what a very large field of religious and philosophical controversy he opened up by some of his arguments, both as to the fasting and as to the burial in churchyards. He only saw, for the moment, what appeared to him the healthy common-sense aspect of the position he had taken up, and did not think or care about what other positions he might be surrendering by the very act. He had not a poetic or philosophic mind. In clearing his intelligence from all that he would have called prejudice or superstition, he had cleared out also much of the deeper sympathetic faculty which enables one man to understand the feelings and get at the springs of conduct in the breasts of other men. No one can doubt that his jaunty way of treating grave and disputed subjects offended many pure and simple minds. Yet it was a mistake to suppose that mere levity dictated his way of dealing with the prejudices of others. He had often given the question his deepest attention, and had come to a conclusion with as much thought as his temperament would have allowed to any subject. The difference between him and graver men was that when he had come to a conclusion seriously, he loved to express his views humorously. He resembled in this respect some of the greatest and the most earnest men of his time. Count Cavour delighted in jocose and humorous answers; so did President Lincoln; so at one period of his public career did Prince Bismarck. But there can be no doubt that Palmerston often made enemies by his seeming levity when another man could easily have made friends by saying just the same thing in grave words. The majority of the House of Commons liked him because he amused them and made them laugh; and they thought no more of the matter.

But the war is now fairly launched; and Palmerston is to all appearance what would be vulgarly called 'out of the swim.' Every eye was turned to him. He was like Pitt standing up on one of the back benches to support the administration of Addington. For years he had been identified with the Foreign Office, and with that sort of foreign policy which

would seem best suited to the atmosphere of war; and now war is on foot, and Palmerston is in the Home Office pleasantly 'chaffing' militia colonels and making sensitive theologians angry by the flippancy of his replies. Perhaps there was something flattering to Palmerston's feeling of self-love in the curious wonder with which people turned their eyes upon him during all that interval. Everyone seemed to ask how the country was to get on without him or to manage its foreign affairs, and when he would be good enough to come down from his quiet seat in the Home Office and assume what seemed his natural duties. A famous tenor singer of our day once had some quarrel with his manager. The singer withdrew from the company; someone else had to be put in his place. On the first night when the new man made his appearance before the public, the great singer was seen in a box calmly watching the performance like any other of the audience. The new man turned out a failure. The eyes of the house began to fix themselves upon the one who could sing, but who was sitting as unconcernedly in his box as if he never meant to sing any more. The audience at first was incredulous. It was in a great provincial city where the singer had always been a prime favourite. They could not believe that they were in good faith to be expected to put up with bad singing while he was there. At last their patience gave way. They insisted on the one singer leaving his place on the stage, and the other coming down from his box and his easy attitude of unconcern, and resuming what they regarded as his proper part. They would have their way; they carried their point; and the man who could sing was compelled at last to return to the scene of his old triumphs and sing for them again. The attitude of Lord Palmerston and the manner in which the public eyes were turned upon him during the early days of the war could hardly be illustrated more effectively than by this story. As yet the only wonder was why he did not take somehow the directorship of affairs; the time was to come when the general voice would insist upon his doing so.

One day a startling report ran through all circles. It was given out that Palmerston had actually resigned. So far was he from any intention of taking on himself the direction of affairs—even of war or of foreign affairs—that he appeared to have gone out of the Ministry altogether. The report was confirmed: Palmerston actually had resigned. It was at once asserted that his resignation was caused by difference of opinion between him and his colleagues on the Eastern policy of the Government. But, on the other hand, it was as stoutly affirmed that the difference of opinion had only to do with the new Reform Bill which Lord John Russell was preparing to introduce. Now it is certain that Lord Palmerston did differ in opinion with Lord John Russell on the subject of his

Reform Bill. It is certain that this was the avowed cause, and the only avowed cause of Palmerston's resignation. But it is equally certain that the real cause of the resignation was the conviction in Palmerston's mind that his colleagues were not up to the demands of the crisis in regard to the Eastern war. Lord Palmerston's letters to his brother on the subject are amusing. They resemble some of the epistles which used to pass between suspected lovers in old days, and in which the words were so arranged that the sentences conveyed an obvious meaning good enough for the eye of jealous authority, but had a very different tale to tell to the one being for whom the truth was intended. Lord Palmerston gives his brother a long and circumstantial account of the differences about the Reform Bill, and about the impossibility of a Home Secretary either supporting by speech a Bill he did not like or sitting silent during the whole discussion on it in the House of Commons. He shows that he could not possibly do otherwise under such trying circumstances than resign. The whole letter, until we come to the very last paragraph, is about the Reform Bill and nothing else. One might suppose that nothing else whatever was entering into the writer's thoughts. But at the end Palmerston just remembers to add that the *Times* was telling 'an untruth' when it said there had been no difference in the Cabinet about Eastern affairs; for in fact there had been some little lack of agreement on the subject, but it would have looked rather silly, Palmerston thinks, if he were to have gone out of office merely because he could not have his own way about Turkish affairs. Exactly; and in a few days after Palmerston was induced to withdraw his resignation and to remain in the Government; and then he wrote to his brother again explaining how and all about it. He explains that several members of the Cabinet told him they considered the details of the Reform Bill quite open to discussion and so forth. 'Their earnest representations, and the knowledge that the Cabinet had on Thursday taken a decision on Turkish affairs in entire accordance with opinions which I had long unsuccessfully pressed upon them, decided me to withdraw my resignation, which I did yesterday.' 'Of course,' Lord Palmerston quietly adds, 'what I say to you about the Cabinet decision on Turkish affairs is entirely for yourself and not to be mentioned to anybody. But it is very important, and will give the allied squadrons the command of the Black Sea.' All this was very prudent, of course, and very prettily arranged. But we doubt whether a single man in England who cared anything about the whole question was imposed upon for one moment. Nobody believed that at such a time Lord Palmerston would have gone out of office because he did not quite like the details of a Reform Bill, or that the Cabinet would have obstinately clung to such a scheme just then in spite of his opposition.

Indeed the first impression of everyone was that Palmerston had gone out only in order to come back again much stronger than before; that he resigned when he could not have his way in Eastern affairs, and that he would resume office empowered to have his way in everything. The explanations about the Reform Bill found as impatient listeners among the public at large as the desperate attempts of the young heroine in 'She Stoops to Conquer' to satisfy honest Tony Lumpkin with her hasty and ill-concocted devices about Shagbag and Green and the rest of them, whose story she pretends to read for him from the letter which is not intended to reach the suspicious ears of his mother. When Lord Palmerston resumed his place in the Ministry, the public at large felt certain that the war spirit was now at last to have its way, and that the dallyings of the peace-lovers were over.

Nor was England long left to guess at the reason why Lord Palmerston had so suddenly resigned his office and so suddenly returned to it. A great disaster had fallen upon Turkey. Her fleet had been destroyed by the Russians at Sinope, in the Black Sea. Sinope is, or was, a considerable seaport town and naval station belonging to Turkey, and standing on a rocky promontory on the southern shore of the Black Sea. On November 30, 1853, the Turkish squadron was lying there at anchor. The squadron consisted of seven frigates, a sloop, and a steamer. It had no ship of the line. The Russian fleet, consisting of six ships of the line and some steamers, had been cruising about the Black Sea for several days previously, issuing from Sebastopol, and making an occasional swoop now and then as if to bear down upon the Turkish squadron. The Turkish commander was quite aware of the danger, and pressed for reinforcements; but nothing was done, either by the Turkish Government or by the ambassadors of the allies at Constantinople. On November 30, however, the Sebastopol fleet did actually bear down upon the Turkish vessels lying at Sinope. The Turks, seeing that an attack was coming at last, not only accepted, but even anticipated it; for they were the first to fire. The fight was hopeless for them. They fought with all the desperate energy of fearless and unconquerable men; unconquerable, at least, in the sense that they would not yield. But the odds were too much against them to give them any chance. Either they would not haul down their flag, which is very likely; or if they did strike their colours, the Russian admiral did not see the signal. The fight went on until the whole Turkish squadron, save for the steamer, was destroyed. It was asserted on official authority that more than four thousand Turks were killed; that the survivors hardly numbered four hundred; and that of these every man was wounded. Sinope itself was much shattered and battered by

the Russian fleet. The affair was at once the destruction of the Turkish ships and an attack upon Turkish territory.

This was 'the massacre of Sinope.' When the news came to England there arose one cry of grief and anger and shame. It was regarded as a deliberate act of treachery, consummated amid conditions of the most hideous barbarity. A clamour arose against the Emperor of Russia as if he were a monster outside the pale of civilised law, like some of the furious and treacherous despots of mediæval Asiatic history. Mr. Kinglake has shown—and indeed the sequence of events must in time have shown everyone—that there was no foundation for these accusations. The attack was not treacherous, but openly made; not sudden, but clearly announced by previous acts, and long expected, as we have seen, by the Turkish commander himself; and it was not in breach even of the courtesies of war. Russia and Turkey were not only formally but actually at war. The Turks were the first to begin the actual military operations. More than five weeks before the affair at Sinope they had opened the business by firing from a fortress on a Russian flotilla. A few days after this act they crossed the Danube at Widdin and occupied Kalafat; and for several days they had fought under Omar Pasha with brilliant success against the Russians at Oltenitza. All England had been enthusiastic about the bravery which the Turks had shown at Oltenitza and the success which had attended their first encounter with the enemy. It was hardly to be expected that the Emperor of Russia would only fight when he was at a disadvantage and refrain from attack where his power was overwhelming. Still there was an impression among English and French statesmen that while negotiations for peace were actually going on between the Western Powers and Russia, and while the fleets of England and France were remaining peacefully at anchor in the Bosphorus, whither they had been summoned by this time, the Russian Emperor would abstain from complicating matters by making use of his Sebastopol fleet. Nothing could have been more unwise than to act upon an impression of this kind as if it were a regular agreement. But the English public did not understand at that moment the actual condition of things, and may well have supposed that if our Government seemed secure and content, there must have been some definite arrangement to create so happy a condition of mind. It may look strange to readers now, surveying this chapter of past history with cool, unimpassioned mind, that anybody could have believed in the existence of any arrangement by virtue of which Turkey could be at war with Russia and not at war with her at the same time; which would have allowed Turkey to strike her enemy when and how she pleased, and would have restricted the enemy to such time, place, and method of retort as

might suit the convenience of the neutral Powers. But at the time, when the true state of affairs was little known in England, the account of the 'massacre of Sinope' was received as if it had been the tale of some unparalleled act of treachery and savagery; and the eagerness of the country for war against Russia became inflamed to actual passion.

It was at that moment that Palmerston resigned his office. The Cabinet were still not prepared to go as far as he would have gone. They had believed that the Sebastopol fleet would do nothing as long as the Western Powers kept talking about peace; they now believed perhaps that the Emperor of Russia would say he was very sorry for what had been done and promise not to do so any more. Lord Palmerston, supported by the urgent pressure of the Emperor of the French, succeeded, however, in at last overcoming their determination. It was agreed that some decisive announcement should be made to the Emperor of Russia on the part of England and France; and Lord Palmerston resumed his place, master of the situation. This was the decision of which he had spoken in his letter to his brother; the decision which he said he had long unsuccessfully pressed upon his colleagues, and which would give the allied squadrons the command of the Black Sea. It was, in fact, an intimation to Russia that France and England were resolved to prevent any repetition of the Sinope affair; that their squadrons would enter the Black Sea with orders to request, and if necessary to constrain, every Russian ship met in the Euxine to return to Sebastopol; and to repel by force any act of aggression afterwards attempted against the Ottoman territory or flag. This was not, it should be observed, simply an intimation to the Emperor of Russia that the great Powers would impose and enforce the neutrality of the Black Sea. It was an announcement that if the flag of Russia dared to show itself on that sea, which washed Russia's southern shores, the war-ships of two far foreign States, taking possession of those waters, would pull it down, or compel those who bore it to fly ignominiously into port. This was, in fact, war.

Of course Lord Palmerston knew this. Because it meant war he accepted it and returned to his place, well pleased with the way in which things were going. From his point of view he was perfectly right. He had been consistent all through. He believed from the first that the pretensions of Russia would have to be put down by force of arms, and could not be put down in any other way; he believed that the danger to England from the aggrandisement of Russia was a capital danger calling for any extent of national sacrifice to avert it. He believed that a war with Russia was inevitable, and he preferred taking it sooner to taking it later. He believed that an alliance with the Emperor of the French was

desirable, and a war with Russia would be the best means of making this effective. Lord Palmerston, therefore, was determined not to remain in the Cabinet unless some strenuous measures were taken, and now, as on a memorable former occasion, he understood better than anyone else the prevailing temper of the English people.

When the resolution of the Western Cabinets was communicated to the Emperor of Russia he withdrew his representatives from London and Paris. On February 21, 1854, the diplomatic relations between Russia and the two allied Powers were brought to a stop. Six weeks before this the English and French fleets had entered the Black Sea. The interval was filled up with renewed efforts to bring about a peaceful arrangement, which were conducted with as much gravity as if anyone believed in the possibility of their success. The Emperor of the French, who always loved letter-writing, and delighted in what Cobden once happily called the 'monumental style,' wrote to the Russian Emperor appealing to him, professedly in the interests of peace, to allow an armistice to be signed, to let the belligerent forces on both sides retire from the places to which motives of war had led them, and then to negotiate a convention with the Sultan which might be submitted to a conference of the four Powers. If Russia would not do this, then Louis Napoleon, undertaking to speak in the name of the Queen of Great Britain as well as of himself, intimated that France and England would be compelled to leave to the chances of war what might now be decided by reason and justice. The Emperor Nicholas replied that he had claimed nothing but what was confirmed by treaties; that his conditions were perfectly well-known; that he was still willing to treat on these conditions; but if Russia were driven to arms, then he quietly observed that he had no doubt she could hold her own as well in 1854 as she had done in 1812. That year, 1812, it is hardly necessary to say, was the year of the burning of Moscow and the disastrous retreat of the French. We can easily understand what faith in the possibility of a peaceful arrangement the Russian Emperor must have had when he made the allusion and the French Emperor must have had when it met his eye. Of course if Louis Napoleon had had the faintest belief in any good result to come of his letter he would never have closed it with the threat which provoked the Russian sovereign into his insufferable rejoinder. The correspondence might remind one of that which is said to have passed between two Irish chieftains. 'Pay me my tribute,' wrote the one, 'or else!' 'I owe you no tribute,' replied the other, 'and if . . .'

England's ultimatum to Russia was despatched on February 27, 1854. It was conveyed in a letter from Lord Clarendon to Count Nesselrode. It

declared that the British Government had exhausted all the efforts of negotiation, and was compelled to announce that 'if Russia should decline to restrict within purely diplomatic limits the discussion in which she has for some time past been engaged with the Sublime Porte, and does not, by return of the messenger who is the bearer of my present letter, announce her intention of causing the Russian troops under Prince Gortschakoff to commence their march with a view to recross the Pruth, so that the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia shall be completely evacuated on April 30 next, the British Government must consider the refusal or the silence of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg as equivalent to a declaration of war and will take its measures accordingly.' It is not perhaps very profitable work for the historian to criticise the mere terms of a document announcing a course of action which long before its issue had become inevitable. But it is worth while remarking perhaps that it would have been better and more dignified to confine the letter to the simple demand for the evacuation of the Danubian provinces. To ask Russia to promise that her controversy with the Porte should be thenceforward restricted within purely diplomatic limits was to make a demand with which no great Power would, or indeed could, undertake to comply. A member of the Peace Society itself might well hesitate to give a promise that a dispute in which he was engaged should be for ever confined within purely diplomatic limits. In any case it was certain that Russia would not now make any concessions tending towards peace. The messenger who was the bearer of the letter was ordered not to wait more than six days for an answer. On the fifth day the messenger was informed by word of mouth from Count Nesselrode that the Emperor did not think it becoming in him to give any reply to the letter. The die was cast. Rather, truly, the fact was recorded that the die had been cast. A few days after a crowd assembled in front of the Royal Exchange to watch the performance of a ceremonial that had been little known to the living generation. The Sergeant-at-Arms, accompanied by some of the officials of the City, read from the steps of the Royal Exchange her Majesty's declaration of war against Russia.

The causes of the declaration of war were set forth in an official statement published in the *London Gazette*. This document is an interesting and a valuable State paper. It recites with clearness and deliberation the successive steps by which the allied Powers had been led to the necessity of an armed intervention in the controversy between Turkey and Russia. It described, in the first place, the complaint of the Emperor of Russia against the Sultan with reference to the claims of the Greek and Latin Churches, and the arrangement promoted satisfactorily by her Majesty's ambassador at Constantinople for rendering justice to the claim, 'an ar-

rangement to which no exception was taken by the Russian Government.' Then came the sudden unmasking of the other and quite different claims of Prince Mentschikoff, 'the nature of which in the first instance he endeavoured, as far as possible, to conceal from her Majesty's ambassador.' These claims, 'thus studiously concealed,' affected not merely, or at all, the privileges of the Greek Church at Jerusalem, 'but the position of many millions of Turkish subjects in their relations to their sovereign the Sultan.' The declaration recalled the various attempts that were made by the Queen's Government in conjunction with the Governments of France, Austria, and Prussia, to meet any just demands of the Russian Emperor without affecting the dignity and independence of the Sultan; and showed that if the object of Russia had been solely to secure their proper privileges and immunities for the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire, the offers that were made could not have failed to meet that object. Her Majesty's Government, therefore, held it as manifest that what Russia was really seeking was not the happiness of the Christian communities of Turkey, but the right to interfere in the ordinary relations between Turkish subjects and their sovereign. The Sultan refused to consent to this, and declared war in self-defence. Yet the Government of Her Majesty did not renounce all hope of restoring peace between the contending parties until, advice and remonstrance proving wholly in vain, and Russia continuing to extend her military preparations, her Majesty felt called upon, 'by regard for an ally, the integrity and independence of whose Empire have been recognised as essential to the peace of Europe; by the sympathies of her people with right against wrong; by a desire to avert from her dominions most injurious consequences, and to save Europe from the preponderance of a Power which has violated the faith of treaties and defies the opinion of the civilised world, to take up arms in conjunction with the Emperor of the French for the defence of the Sultan.'

Some passages of this declaration have invited criticism from English historians. It opens, for example, with a statement of the fact that the efforts for an arrangement were made by her Majesty in conjunction with France, Austria and Prussia. It speaks of this concert of the four Powers down almost to the very close; and then it suddenly breaks off and announces, that, in consequence of all that has happened, her Majesty has felt compelled to take up arms 'in conjunction with the Emperor of the French.' What strange diplomatic mismanagement, it was asked, has led to this singular *non sequitur?* Why, after having carried on the negotiations through all their various stages with three other great Powers, all of them supposed to be equally interested in a settlement of the question, is

England at the last moment compelled to take up arms with only one of those Powers as an ally?

The principal reason for the separation of the two Western Powers of Europe from the other great States was found in the condition of Prussia. Prussia was then greatly under the influence of the Russian court. The Prussian sovereign was related to the Emperor of Russia; and his kingdom was almost overshadowed by Russian influence. Prussia had come to occupy a lower position in Europe than she had ever before held during her existence as a kingdom. It seemed almost marvellous how by any process the country of the Great Frederick could have sunk to such a condition of insignificance. She had been compelled to stoop to Austria after the events of 1848. The King of Prussia, tampering with the offers of the strong national party who desired to make him Emperor of Germany, now moving forward and now drawing back, 'letting I dare not wait upon I would,' was suddenly pulled up by Austria. The famous arrangement, called afterwards 'the humiliation of Olmütz,' and so completely revenged at Sadowa, compelled him to drop all his triflings with nationalism and repudiate his former instigators. The King of Prussia was a highly-cultured, amiable literary man. He loved letters and art in a sort of *dilettante* way; he had good impulses and a weak nature; he was a dreamer; a sort of philosopher *manqué*. He was unable to make up his mind to any momentous decision until the time for rendering it effective had gone by. A man naturally truthful, he was often led by very weakness into acts that seemed irreconcilable with his previous promises and engagements. He could say witty and sarcastic things, and when political affairs went wrong with him, he could console himself with one or two sharp sayings only heard by those immediately around him; and then the world might go its way for him. He was, like Rob Roy, 'ower good for banning and ower bad for blessing.' Like our own Charles II., he never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one. He ought to have been an æsthetic essayist, or a lecturer on art and moral philosophy to young ladies; and an unkind destiny had made him the king of a State specially embarrassed in a most troublous time. So unkindly was popular rumour as well as fate to him, that he got the credit in foreign countries of being a stupid sensualist, when he was really a man of respectable habits and refined nature; and in England at least the nickname 'King Clicquot' was long the brand by which the popular and most mistaken impression of his character was signified.

The King of Prussia was the elder brother of the present German Emperor. Had the latter been then on the throne he would probably have taken some timely and energetic decision with regard to the national

duty of Prussia during the impending crisis. Right or wrong, he would doubtless have contrived to see his way and make up his mind at an early stage of the European movement. It is by no means to be assumed that he would have taken the course most satisfactory to England and France: but it is likely that his action might have prevented the war, either by rendering the allied Powers far too strong to be resisted by Russia, or by adding to Russia an influence which would have rendered the game of war too formidable to suit the calculations of the Emperor of the French. The actual King of Prussia, however, went so far with the allies as to lead them for a while to believe that he was going all the way; but at the last moment he broke off, declared that the interests of Prussia did not require or allow him to engage in a war, and left France and England to walk their own road. Austria could not venture upon such a war without the co-operation of Prussia; and indeed the course which the campaign took seemed likely to give both Austria and Prussia a good excuse for assuming that their interests were not closely engaged in the struggle. Austria would most certainly have gone to war if the Emperor of Russia had kept up the occupation of the Danubian Principalities and for that purpose her territorial situation made her irresistible. But when the seat of war was transferred to the Black Sea, and when after a while the Czar withdrew his troops from the Principalities and Austria occupied them by virtue of a convention with the Sultan, her direct interest in the struggle was reduced almost to nothing. Austria and Prussia were in fact solicited by both sides of the dispute, and at one time it was even thought possible that Prussia might give her aid to Russia. This, however, she refrained from doing; Austria and Prussia made an arrangement between themselves for mutual defence in case the progress of the war should directly imperil the interests of either; and England and France undertook in alliance the task of chastising the presumption and restraining the ambitious designs of Russia. Mr. Kinglake finds much fault with the policy of the English Government, on which he lays all the blame of the severance of interests between the two Western States and the other two great Powers. But we confess that we do not see how any course within the reach of England could have secured just then the thorough alliance of Prussia; and without such an alliance it would have been vain to expect that Austria would throw herself unreservedly into the policy of the Western Powers. It must be remembered that the controversy between Russia and the West really involved several distinct questions, in some of which Prussia had absolutely no direct interest and Austria very little. Let us set out some of these questions separately. There was the Russian occupation of the Principalities. In this Austria frankly acknowledged her capital interest.

Its direct bearing was on her more than any other Power. It concerned Prussia as it did England and France, inasmuch as it was an evidence of an aggressive purpose which might very seriously threaten the general stability of the institutions of Europe; but Prussia had no closer interest in it. Austria was the State most affected by it, and Austria was the State which could with most effect operate against it, and was always willing and resolute if needs were to do so. Then there was the question of Russia's claim to exercise a protectorate over the Christian populations of Turkey. This concerned England and France in one sense as part of the general pretensions of Russia, and concerned each of them separately in another sense. To France it told of a rivalry with the right she claimed to look after the interests of the Latin Church; to England it spoke of a purpose to obtain a hold over populations nominally subject to the Sultan which might in time make Russia virtual master of the approaches to our Eastern possessions. Austria too had a direct interest in repelling these pretensions of Russia, for some of the populations they referred to were on her very frontier. But Prussia can hardly be said to have had any direct national interest in that question at all. Then there came, distinct from all these, the question of the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus.

This question of the Straits, which has so much to do with the whole European aspect of the war, is not to be understood except by those who bear the conformation of the map of Europe constantly in their minds. The only outlet of Russia on the southern side is the Black Sea. The Black Sea is, save for one little outlet at its south-western extremity, a huge land-locked lake. That little outlet is the narrow channel called the Bosphorus. Russia and Turkey between them surround the whole of the Black Sea with their territory. Russia has the north and some of the eastern shore; Turkey has all the southern, the Asia Minor shore, and nearly all the western shore. Close the Straits of the Bosphorus and Russia would be literally locked into the Black Sea. The Bosphorus is a narrow channel, as has been said; it is some seventeen miles in length, and in some places it is hardly more than half a mile in breadth. But it is very deep all through, so that ships of war can float close up to its very shores on either side. This channel in its course passes between the city of Constantinople and its Asiatic suburb of Scutari. The Bosphorus then opens into the little Sea of Marmora; and out of the Sea of Marmora the way westward is through the channel of the Dardanelles. The Dardanelles form the only passage into the Archipelago, and thence into the Mediterranean. The channel of the Dardanelles is, like the Bosphorus, very narrow and very deep, but it pursues its course for some forty miles.

Any one who holds a map in his hand will see at once how Turkey and Russia alike are affected by the existence of the Straits on either extremity of the Sea of Marmora. Close up these Straits against vessels of war, and the capital of the Sultan is absolutely unassailable from the sea. Close them, on the other hand, and the Russian fleet in the Black Sea is absolutely cut off from the Mediterranean and the Western World. But then it has to be remembered that the same act of closing would secure the Russian ports and shores on the Black Sea from the approach of any of the great navies of the West. The Dardanelles and the Bosphorus being alike such narrow channels, and being edged alike by Turkish territory, were not regarded as high seas. The Sultans always claimed the right to exclude foreign ships of war from both the Straits. The Treaty of 1841 secured this right to Turkey by the agreement of the five great Powers of Europe. The treaty acknowledged that the Porte had the right to shut the Straits against the armed navies of any foreign Power; and the Sultan, for his part, engaged not to allow any such navy to enter either of the Straits in time of peace. The closing of the Straits had been the subject of a perfect succession of treaties. The Treaty of 1809 between Great Britain and Turkey confirmed by engagement 'the ancient rule of the Ottoman empire' forbidding vessels of war at all times to enter the 'Canal of Constantinople.' The Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi between Russia and Turkey, arising out of Russia's co-operation with the Porte to put down the rebellious movement of Mohammed Ali, the Egyptian vassal of the latter, contained a secret clause binding the Porte to close 'the Dardanelles' against all war vessels whatever, thus shutting Russia's enemies out of the Black Sea, but leaving Russia free to pass the Bosphorus, so far at least, as that treaty engagement was concerned. Later, when the great Powers of Europe combined to put down the attempts of Egypt, the Treaty of July 13, 1841, made in London, engaged that in time of peace no foreign ships of war should be admitted into the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. This treaty was but a renewal of a convention made the year before, while France was still sulking away from the European concert and did nothing more than record her return to it.

As matters stood then, the Sultan was not only permitted but was bound to close the Straits in times of peace, and no navy might enter them without his consent even in times of war. But in times of war he might of course give the permission and invite the presence and co-operation of the armed vessels of a foreign Power in the Sea of Marmora. By this treaty the Black Sea fleet of Russia became literally a Black Sea fleet, and could no more reach the Mediterranean and Western Europe than a

boat on the Lake of Lucerne could do. Naturally Russia chafed at this; but at the same time she was not willing to see the restriction withdrawn in favour of an arrangement that would leave the Straits, and consequently the Black Sea, open to the navies of France and England. Her supremacy in Eastern Europe would count for little, her power of coercing Turkey would be sadly diminished, if the war-flag of England, for example, were to float side by side with her own in front of Constantinople or in the Euxine. Therefore it was natural that the ambition of Russia should tend towards the ultimate possession of Constantinople and the Straits for herself; but as this was an ambition the fulfilment of which seemed far off and beset with vast dangers, her object, meanwhile, was to gain as much influence and ascendency as possible over the Ottoman Government; to make it practically the vassal of Russia, and in any case to prevent any other great Power from obtaining the influence and ascendency which she coveted for herself. Now the tendency of this ambition and of all the intermediate claims and disputes with regard to the opening or closing of the Straits was of importance to Europe generally as a part of Russian aggrandisement; but of the great Powers they concerned England most; France as a Mediterranean and a naval power; Austria only in a third and remoter degree; and Prussia at the time of King Frederick William least of all. It is not surprising therefore that the two Western Powers were not able to carry their accord with Prussia to the extent of an alliance in war against Russia; and it was hardly possible then for Austria to go on if Prussia insisted on drawing back. Thus it came that at a certain point of the negotiations Prussia fell off absolutely, or nearly so; Austria undertook but a conditional co-operation, of which, as it happened, the conditions did not arise; and the Queen of England announced that she had taken up arms against Russia 'in conjunction with the Emperor of the French.'

To the great majority of the English people this war was popular. It was popular, partly because of the natural and inevitable reaction against the doctrines of peace and mere trading prosperity which had been preached somewhat too pertinaciously for some time before. But it was popular too because of its novelty. It was like a return to the youth of the world when England found herself once more preparing for the field. It was like the pouring of new blood into old veins. The public had grown impatient of the common saying of foreign capitals, that England had joined the Peace Society and would never be seen in battle any more. Mr. Kinglake is right when he says that the doctrines of the Peace Society had never taken any hold of the higher classes in this country at all. They had never, we may venture to add, taken any real hold of the

humbler classes; of the working men, for example. The well-educated thoughtful middle-class, who knew how much of worldly happiness depends on a regular income, moderate taxation, and a comfortable home, supplied most of the advocates of 'peace,' as it was scornfully said, 'at any price.' Let us say, in justice to a very noble and very futile doctrine, that there were no persons in England who advocated peace 'at any price,' in the ignominious sense which hostile critics pressed upon the words. There was a small, a serious and a very respectable body of persons who, out of the purest motives of conscience, held that all war was criminal and offensive to the Deity. They were for peace at any price, exactly as they were for truth at any price, or conscience at any price. They were opposed to war as they were to falsehood or to impiety. It seemed as natural to them that a man should die unresisting rather than resist and kill, as it does to most persons who profess any sentiment of religion, or even of honour, that a man should die rather than abjure the faith he believes in, or tell a lie. It is assumed as a matter of course that any Englishman worthy of the name would have died by any torture tyranny could put on him rather than perform the old ceremony of trampling on the crucifix which certain heathen States were said to have sometimes insisted on as the price of a captive's freedom. To the believers in the peace doctrine the act of war was a trampling on the crucifix, which brought with it evil consequences unspeakably worse than the mere performance of a profane ceremonial. To declare that they would rather suffer any earthly penalty of defeat or national servitude than take part in a war was only consistent with the great creed of their lives. It ought not to have been held as any reproach to them. Even those who, like this writer, have no personal sympathy with such a belief, and who hold that a war in a just cause is an honour to a nation, may still recognise the purity and nobleness of the principle which inspired the votaries of peace and do honour to it. But these men were in any case not many at the time when the Crimean War broke out. They had very little influence on the course of the national policy. They were assailed with a flippant and a somewhat ignoble ridicule. The worst reproach that could be given to men like Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright was to accuse them of being members of the Peace Society. It does not appear that either man was a member of the actual organisation. Mr. Bright's religious creed made him necessarily a votary of peace; Mr. Cobden had attended meetings called with the futile purpose of establishing peace among nations by the operation of good feeling and of common sense. But for a considerable time the temper of the English people was such as to render any talk about peace not only unprofitable, but perilous to the very cause of peace itself. Some of the leading mem-

bers of the Peace Society did actually get up a deputation to the Emperor Nicholas to appeal to his better feelings; and of course they were charmed by the manners of the Emperor, who made it his business to be in a very gracious humour, and spoke them fair, and introduced them in the most unceremonious way to his wife. Such a visit counted for nothing in Russia, and at home it only tended to make people angry and impatient, and to put the cause of peace in greater jeopardy than ever. Viewed as a practical influence the peace doctrine as completely broken down, as a general resolution against the making of money might have done during the time of the mania for speculation in railway shares. But it did not merely break down of itself. It carried some great influences down with it for the time—influences that were not a part of itself. The eloquence that had coerced the intellect and reasoning power of Peel into a complete surrender to the doctrines of Free Trade, the eloquence that had aroused the populations of all the cities of England and had conquered the House of Commons, was destined now to call aloud to solitude. Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright addressed their constituents and their countrymen in vain. The fact that they were believed to be opposed on principle to all wars put them out of court in public estimation, as Mr. Kinglake justly observes, when they went about to argue against this particular war.

In the Cabinet itself there were men who disliked the idea of a war quite as much as they did. Lord Aberdeen detested war, and thought it so absurd a way of settling national disputes, that almost until the first cannon-shot had been fired he could not bring himself to believe in the possibility of the intelligent English people being drawn into it. Mr. Gladstone had a conscientious and a sensitive objection to war in general as a brutal and an unchristian occupation, although his feelings would not have carried him so far away as to prevent his recognition of the fact that war might often be a just, a necessary and a glorious undertaking on the part of a civilised nation. The difficulties of the hour were considerably enhanced by the differences of opinion that prevailed in the Cabinet.

There were other differences there as well as those that belonged to the mere abstract question of the glory or the guilt of war. It soon became clear that two parties of the Cabinet looked on the war and its objects with different eyes and interests. Lord Palmerston wanted simply to put down Russia and uphold Turkey. Others were specially concerned for the Christian populations of Turkey and their better government. Lord Palmerston not merely thought that the interests of England called for some check to the aggressiveness of Russia; he liked the Turk for himself; he had faith in the future of Turkey: he went so far even as to proclaim his belief in the endurance of her military power. Give Turkey single-

handed a fair chance, he argued, and she would beat Russia. He did not believe either in the disaffection of the Christian populations or in the stories of their oppression. He regarded all these stories as part of the plans and inventions of Russia. He had no half-beliefs in the matter at all. The Christian populations and their grievances he regarded, in plain language, as mere humbugs; he looked upon the Turk as a very fine fellow whom all chivalric minds ought to respect. He believed all that was said upon the one side, and nothing upon the other; he had made up his mind to this long ago, and no arguments or facts could now shake his convictions. A belief of this kind may have been very unphilosophic. It was undoubtedly in many respects the birth of mere prejudice independent of fact or reasoning. But the temper born of such a belief is exactly that which should have the making of a war entrusted to it. Lord Palmerston saw his way straight before him. The brave Turk had to be supported; the wicked Russian had to be put down. On one side there were Lord Aberdeen, who did not believe anyone seriously meant to be so barbarous as to go to war, and Mr. Gladstone, who shrank from war in general and was not yet quite certain whether England had any right to undertake this war; the two being furthermore concerned far more for the welfare of Turkey's Christian subjects than for the stability of Turkey or the humiliation of Russia. On the other side was Lord Palmerston, gay, resolute, clear as to his own purpose, convinced to the heart's core of everything which just then it was for the advantage of his cause to believe. It was impossible to doubt on which side were to be found the materials for the successful conduct of the enterprise which was now so popular with the country. The most conscientious men might differ about the prudence or the moral propriety of the war; but to those who once accepted its necessity and wished our side to win, there could be no possible doubt, even for members of the Peace Society, as to the importance of having Lord Palmerston either at the head of affairs or in charge of the war itself. The moment the war actually broke out, it became evident to everyone that Palmerston's interval of comparative inaction and obscurity was well nigh over.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE INVASION OF THE CRIMEA.

England then and France entered the war as allies. Lord Raglan, formerly Lord Fitzroy Somerset, an old pupil of the Great Duke in the Peninsular War, and who had lost his right arm serving under Wellington at Waterloo,

was appointed to command the English forces. Marshal St. Arnaud, a bold, brilliant soldier of fortune, was entrusted by the Emperor of the French with the leadership of the soldiers of France. The allied forces went out to the East and assembled at Varna, on the Black Sea shore, from which they were to make their descent on the Crimea. The war, meantime, had gone badly for the Emperor of Russia in his attempt to crush the Turks. The Turks had found in Omar Pasha a commander of remarkable ability and energy; and they had in one or two instances received the unexpected aid and counsel of clever and successful Englishmen. A singularly brilliant episode in the opening part of the war was the defence of the earthworks of Silistria, on the Bulgarian bank of the Danube, by a body of Turkish troops under the directions of three young Englishmen; Captain Butler, of the Ceylon Rifles, Lieut. Nasmyth, of the East India Company's Service, and Lieut. J. A. Ballard, of the Bombay Engineers. These young soldiers had voluntarily undertaken the danger and responsibility of the defence. Butler was killed, but the Russians were completely foiled and had to raise the siege. At Giurgevo and other places the Russians were likewise repulsed; and the invasion of the Danubian provinces was already, to all intents, a failure.

Mr. Kinglake and other writers have argued that but for the ambition of the Emperor of the French and the excited temper of the English people the war might well have ended then and there. The Emperor of Russia had found, it is contended, that he could not maintain an invasion of European Turkey; his fleet was confined to its ports in the Black Sea, and there was nothing for him but to make peace. But we confess we do not see with what propriety or wisdom the allies, having entered on the enterprise at all, could have abandoned it at such a moment and allowed the Czar to escape thus merely scotched. However brilliant and gratifying the successes obtained against the Russians, they were but a series of what might be called outpost actions. They could not be supposed to have tested the resources of Russia or weakened her strength. They had humbled and vexed her just enough to make her doubly resentful and no more. It seems impossible to suppose that such trivial disasters could have affected in the slightest degree the historic march of Russian ambition, supposing such a movement to exist. If we allow the purpose with which England entered the war to be just and reasonable, then we think the instinct of the English people was sound and true which would have refused to allow Russia to get off with one or two trifling checks, and to nurse her wrath and keep her vengeance waiting for a better chance some other time. The allies went on. They sailed from Varna for the Crimea nearly three months after the raising of the siege of Silistria.

There is much discussion as to the original author of the project for the

invasion of the Crimea. The Emperor Napoleon has had it ascribed to him; so has Lord Palmerston; so has the Duke of Newcastle; so, according to Mr. Kinglake, has the *Times* newspaper. It does not much concern us to know in whom the idea originated, but it is of some importance to know that it was essentially a civilian's and not a soldier's idea. It took possession almost simultaneously, so far as we can observe, of the minds of several statesmen, and it had a sudden fascination for the public. The Emperor Nicholas had raised and sheltered his Black Sea fleet at Sebastopol. That fleet had sallied forth from Sebastopol to commit what was called the massacre of Sinope. Sebastopol was the great arsenal of Russia. It was the point from which Turkey was threatened; from which, it was universally believed, the embodied ambition of Russia was one day to make its most formidable effort of aggression. Within the fence of its vast sea-forts the fleet of the Black Sea lay screened. From the moment when the vessels of England and France entered the Euxine, the Russian fleet had withdrawn behind the curtain of these defences, and was seen upon the open waves no more. If, therefore, Sebastopol could be taken or destroyed, it would seem as if the whole material fabric, put together at such cost and labour, for the execution of the schemes of Russia would be shattered at a blow. There seemed a dramatic justice in the idea. It could not fail to commend itself to the popular mind.

Mr. Kinglake has given the world an amusing picture of the manner in which the despatch of the Duke of Newcastle, ordering the invasion of the Crimea—for it really amounted to an order—was read to his colleagues in the Cabinet. It was a despatch of the utmost importance, for the terms in which it pressed the project on Lord Raglan really rendered it almost impossible for the Commander-in-Chief to use his own discretion. It ought to have been considered sentence by sentence, word by word. It was read, Mr. Kinglake affirms, to a number of Cabinet Ministers most of whom had fallen fast asleep. The day was warm, he says; the despatch was long; the reading was somewhat monotonous. Most of those who tried to listen found the soporific influence irresistible. As Sam Weller would have said, poppies were nothing to it. The statesmen fell asleep; and there was no alteration made in the despatch. All this is very amusing; and it is, we believe, true enough that at the particular meeting to which Mr. Kinglake refers there was a good deal of nodding of sleepy heads and closing of tired eyelids. But it is not fair to say that these slumbers had anything to do with the subsequent events of the war. The reading of the despatch was purely a piece of formality; for the project it was to recommend had been discussed very fully before, and the minds of most members of the Cabinet were finally made up. The 28th of June,

1854, was the day of the slumbering Cabinet. But Lord Palmerston had during the whole of the previous fortnight at least been urging on the Cabinet, and on individual members of it separately, the Duke of Newcastle in especial, the project of an invasion of the Crimea and an attempt on Sebastopol. With all the energy and strenuousness of his nature he had been urging this, by arguments in the Cabinet, by written memoranda for the consideration of each member of the Cabinet separately, and by long earnest letters addressed to particular members of the Cabinet. Many of these documents, of the existence of which Mr. Kinglake was doubtless not aware when he set down his vivacious and satirical account of the sleeping Cabinet, have since been published. The plan had also been greatly favoured and much urged by the Emperor of the French before the day of the sleep of the statesmen; indeed, as has been said already, he receives from many persons the credit of having originated it. The plan, therefore, good or bad, was thoroughly known to the Cabinet, and had been argued for and against over and over again before the Duke of Newcastle read aloud to drowsy ears the despatch recommending it to the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in the field. The perusal of the despatch was a mere form. It would indeed have been better if the most wearied statesman had contrived to pay a full attention to it, but the want of such respect in no wise affected the policy of the country. It is a pity to have to spoil so amusing a story as Mr. Kinglake's; but the commonplace truth has to be told that the invasion of the Crimea was not due to the crotchet of one minister and the drowsiness of all the rest.

The invasion of the Crimea, however, was not a soldier's project. It was not welcomed by the English or the French commander. It was undertaken by Lord Raglan out of deference to the recommendations of the Government; and by Marshal St. Arnaud out of deference to the Emperor of the French and because Lord Raglan too did not see his way to decline the responsibility of it. The allied forces were therefore conveyed to the south-western shore of the Crimea, and effected a landing in Kalamita Bay, a short distance north of the point at which the river Alma runs into the sea. Sebastopol itself lies about thirty miles to the south; and then more southward still, divided by the bulk of a jutting promontory from Sebastopol, is the harbour of Balaklava. The disembarkation began on the morning of September 14, 1854. It was completed on the fifth day; and there were then some 27,000 English, 30,000 French, and 7,000 Turks, landed on the shores of Catherine the Great's Crimea. The landing was effected without any opposition from the Russians. On September 19 the allies marched out of their encampments and moved southward in the direction of Sebastopol. They had a skirmish or two with a reconnoitring

force of Russian cavalry and Cossacks; but they had no business of genuine war until they reached the nearer bank of the Alma. The Russians in great strength had taken up a splendid position on the heights that fringed the other side of the river. The allied forces reached the Alma about noon on September 20. They found that they had to cross the river in the face of the Russian batteries armed with heavy guns on the highest point of the hills or bluffs, of scattered artillery, and of dense masses of infantry which covered the hills. The Russians were under the command of Prince Mentschikoff. It is certain that Prince Mentschikoff believed his position unassailable, and was convinced that his enemies were delivered into his hands when he saw the allies approach and attempt to effect the crossing of the river. He had allowed them, of deliberate purpose, to approach thus far. He might have attacked them on their landing, or on their two days' march towards towards the river. But he did not choose to do anything of the kind. He had carefully sought out a strong and what he considered an impregnable position. He had found it, as he believed, on the south bank of the Alma; and there he was simply biding his time. His idea was that he could hold his ground for some days against the allies with ease; that he would keep them there, play with them, until the great reinforcements he was expecting could come to him; and then he would suddenly take the offensive and crush the enemy. He proposed to make of the Alma and its banks the grave of the invaders. But with characteristic arrogance and lack of care he had neglected some of the very precautions which were essentially necessary to secure any position, however strong. He had not taken the pains to make himself certain that every easy access to his position was closed against the attack of the enemy. The attack was made with desperate courage on the part of the allies, but without any great skill of leadership or tenacity of discipline. It was rather a pell-mell sort of fight, in which the head-long courage and the indomitable obstinacy of the English and French troops carried all before them at last. A study of the battle is of little profit to the ordinary reader. It was an heroic scramble. There was little coherence of action between the allied forces. But there was happily an almost total absence of generalship on the part of the Russians. The soldiers of the Czar fought stoutly and stubbornly as they have always done; but they could not stand up against the blended vehemence and obstinacy of the English and French. The river was crossed, the opposite heights were mounted, Prince Mentschikoff's great redoubt was carried, the Russians were driven from the field, the allies occupied their ground; the victory was to the Western Powers. Indeed, it would not be unfair to say that the victory was to the English; owing to whatever cause, the

French did not take that share in the heat of the battle which their strength and their military genius might have led men to expect. St. Arnaud, their commander-in-chief, was in wretched health, on the point of death, in fact; he was in no condition to guide the battle; a brilliant enterprise of General Bosquet was ill-supported and had nearly proved a failure; and Prince Napoleon's division got hopelessly jammed up and confused. Perhaps it would be fairer to say that in the confusion and scramble of the whole affair we were more lucky than the French. If a number of men are rushing headlong and in the dark towards some distant point, one may run against an unthought-of obstacle and fall down and so lose his chance, while his comrade happens to meet with no such stumbling-block and goes right on. Perhaps this illustration may not unfairly distribute the parts taken in the battle. It would be superfluous to say that the French fought splendidly where they had any real chance of fighting. But the luck of the day was not with them. On all sides the battle was fought without generalship. On all sides the bravery of the officers and men was worthy of any general. Our men were the luckiest. They saw the heights; they saw the enemy there; they made for him; they got at him; they would not go back; and so he had to give way. That was the history of the day. The big scramble was all over in a few hours. The first field was fought, and we had won.

The Russians ought to have been pursued. They themselves fully expected a pursuit. They retreated in something like utter confusion, eager to put the Katcha river, which runs south of the Alma and with a somewhat similar course, between them and the imaginary pursuers. Had they been followed to the Katcha they might have been all made prisoners or destroyed. But there was no pursuit. Lord Raglan was eager to follow up the victory; but the French had as yet hardly any cavalry, and Marshal St. Arnaud would not agree to any further enterprise that day. Lord Raglan believed that he ought not to persist; and nothing was done. The Russians were unable at first to believe in their good fortune. It seemed to them for a long time impossible that any commanders in the world could have failed, under conditions so tempting, to follow a flying and disordered enemy.

Except for the bravery of those who fought, the battle was not much to boast of. The allies together considerably outnumbered the Russians, although, from the causes we have mentioned, the Englishmen were left throughout the greater part of the day to encounter an enemy numerically superior, posted on difficult and commanding heights. But it was the first great battle which for nearly forty years our soldiers had fought with a civilised enemy. The military authorities and the country were well disposed to make the most of it. At this distance of time it is almost touching

to read some of the heroic contemporaneous descriptions of the great scramble of the Alma. It might almost seem as if, in the imaginings of the enthusiastic historians, Englishmen had never mounted heights and defeated superior numbers before. The sublime triumphs against every adverse condition which had been won by the genius of a Marlborough or a Wellington could not have been celebrated in language of more exalted dithyrambic pomp. The gallant medley on the banks of the Alma and the fruitless interval of inaction that followed it were told of as if men were speaking of some battle of the gods.

Very soon, however, a different note came to be sounded. The campaign had been opened under conditions differing from those of most campaigns that went before it. Science had added many new discoveries to the art of war. Literature had added one remarkable contribution of her own to the conditions amid which campaigns were to be carried on. She had added the 'special correspondent.' The old-fashioned historiographer of wars travelled to please sovereigns and minister to the self-conceit of conquerors. The modern special correspondent had a very different purpose. He watched the movements of armies and criticised the policy of generals in the interest of some journal, which for its part was concerned only for the information of the public. No favour that courts or monarchs could bestow was worthy a moment's consideration in the mind even of the most selfish proprietor of a newspaper when compared with the reward which the public could give to him and to his paper for quick and accurate news and trustworthy comment. The business of the special correspondent has grown so much since the Crimean War that we are now inclined to look back upon the war correspondents of those days almost as men then did upon the old-fashioned historiographer. The war correspondent now scrawls his despatches as he sits in his saddle under the fire of the enemy; he scrawls them with a pencil, noting and describing each incident of the fight, so far as he can see it, as coolly as if he were describing a review of volunteers in Hyde Park; and he contrives to send off his narrative by telegraph before the victor in the fight has begun to pursue, or has settled down to hold the ground he won; and the war correspondent's story is expected to be as brilliant and picturesque in style as it ought to be exact and faithful in its statements. In the days of the Crimea things had not advanced quite so far as that; the war was well on before the submarine telegraph between Varna and the Crimea allowed of daily reports; but the feats of the war correspondent then filled men's minds with wonder. When the expedition was leaving England it was accompanied by a special correspondent from each of the great daily papers of London. The *Times* sent out a representative whose name almost immediately became celebrated

—Mr. William Howard Russell, the *preux chevalier* of war correspondents in that day as Mr. Archibald Forbes of the *Daily News* is in this. Mr. Russell rendered some service to the English army and to his country, however, which no brilliancy of literary style would alone have enabled him to do. It was to his great credit as a man of judgment and observation that, being a civilian who had never before seen one puff of war-smoke, he was able to distinguish between the confusion inseparable from all actual levying of war and the confusion that comes of distinctly bad administration. To the unaccustomed eye of an ordinary civilian the whole progress of a campaign, the development of a battle, the arrangements of the commissariat, appear, at any moment of actual pressure, to be nothing but a mass of confusion. He is accustomed in civil life to find everything in its proper place, and every emergency well provided for. When he is suddenly plunged into the midst of a campaign he is apt to think that everything must be going wrong; or else he assumes contentedly that the whole is in the hands of persons who know better than he, and that it would be absurd on his part to attempt to criticise the arrangements of the men whose business it is to understand them. Mr. Russell soon saw that there was confusion; and he had the soundness of judgment to know that the confusion was that of a breaking-down system. Therefore, while the fervour of delight in the courage and success of our army was still fresh in the minds of the public at home, while every music-hall was ringing with the cheap rewards of valour in the shape of popular glorifications of our commanders and our soldiers, the readers of the *Times* began to learn that things were faring badly indeed with the conquering army of the Alma. The ranks were thinned by the ravages of cholera. The men were pursued by cholera to the very battle-field, Lord Raglan himself said. No system can charm away all the effects of climate; but it appeared only too soon that the arrangements made to encounter the indirect and inevitable dangers of a campaign were miserably inefficient. The hospitals were in a wretchedly disorganised condition. Stores of medicines and strengthening food were decaying in places where no one wanted them or could well get at them, while men were dying in hundreds among our tents in the Crimea for lack of them. The system of clothing, of transport, of feeding, of nursing—everything had broken down. Ample provisions had been got together and paid for; and when they came to be needed no one knew where to get at them. The special correspondent of the *Times* and other correspondents continued to din these things into the ears of the public at home. Exultation began to give way to a feeling of dismay. The patriotic anger against the Russians was changed for a mood of deep indignation against our own authorities and our own war administration.

It soon became apparent to everyone that the whole campaign had been planned on the assumption that it was to be like the career of the hero whom Byron laments, 'brief, brave, and glorious.' Our military authorities here at home—we do not speak of the commanders in the field—had made up their minds that Sebastopol was to fall like another Jericho, at the sound of the war-trumpets' blast.

Our commanders in the field were, on the contrary, rather disposed to overrate than to underrate the strength of the Russians. It was, therefore, somewhat like the condition of things described in Macaulay's ballad: those behind cried forward, those in front called back. It is very likely that if a sudden dash had been made at Sebastopol by land and sea, it might have been taken almost at the very opening of the war. But the delay gave the Russians full warning; and they did not neglect it. On the third day after the battle of the Alma the Russians sank seven vessels of their Black Sea fleet at the entrance of the harbour of Sebastopol. This was done full in the sight of the allied fleets, who, at first, misunderstanding the movements going on among the enemy, thought the Russian squadron were about to come out from their shelter and try conclusions with the Western ships. But the real purpose of the Russians became soon apparent. Under the eyes of the allies the seven vessels slowly settled down and sank in the water until at last only the tops of their masts were to be seen; and the entrance of the harbour was barred as by sunken rocks against any approach of an enemy's ship. There was an end to every dream of a sudden capture of Sebastopol.

The allied armies moved again from their positions on the Alma; but they did not direct their march to the north side of Sebastopol. They made for Balaklava, which lies south of the city, on the other side of a promontory, and which has a port that might enable them to secure a constant means of communication between the armies and the fleets. To reach Balaklava the allied forces had to undertake a long and fatiguing flank march, passing Sebastopol on their right. They accomplished the march in safety and occupied the heights above Balaklava, while the fleets appeared at the same time in the harbour. Sebastopol was but a few miles off, and preparations were at once made for an attack on it by land and sea. On October 17 the attack began. It was practically a failure. Nothing better indeed could well have been expected. The fleet could not get near enough to the sea-forts of Sebastopol to make their broadsides of any real effect, because of the shallow water and the sunken ships; and although the attack from the land was vigorous and was fiercely kept up, yet it could not carry its object. It became clear that Sebastopol was not to be taken by any *coup de main*; and the allies had not men enough to

invest it. They were, therefore, to some extent themselves in the condition of a besieged force, for the Russians had a large army outside Sebastopol ready to make every sacrifice for the purpose of preventing the English and French from getting even a chance of undisturbed operations against it.

The Russians attacked the allies fiercely on October 25, in the hope of obtaining possession of Balaklava. The attempt was bold and brilliant; but it was splendidly repulsed. Never did a day of battle do more credit to English courage, or less perhaps to English generalship. The cavalry particularly distinguished themselves. It was in great measure on our side a cavalry action. It will be memorable in all English history as the battle in which occurred the famous charge of the Light Brigade. Owing to some fatal misconception of the meaning of an order from the Commander-in-Chief, the Light Brigade, 607 men in all, charged what has been rightly described as 'the Russian army in position.' The brigade was composed of 118 men of the 4th Light Dragoons; 104 of the 8th Hussars; 110 of the 11th Hussars; 130 of the 13th Light Dragoons; and 145 of the 17th Lancers. Of the 607 men 198 came back. Long, painful, and hopeless were the disputes about this fatal order. The controversy can never be wholly settled. The officer who bore the order was one of the first who fell in the outset. All Europe, all the world, rang with wonder and admiration of the futile and splendid charge. The Poet Laureate sang of it in spirited verses. Perhaps its best epitaph was contained in the celebrated comment ascribed to the French General Bosquet, and which has since become proverbial, and been quoted until men are well nigh tired of it—'It was magnificent, but it was not war.'

Next day the enemy made another vigorous attack, on a much larger scale, moving out of Sebastopol itself, and were again repulsed. The allies were able to prevent the troops who made the sortie from co-operating with the Russian army outside who had attacked at Balaklava. The latter were endeavouring to entrench themselves at the little village of Inkerman, lying on the north of Sebastopol; but the stout resistance they met with from the allies frustrated their plans. On November 5 the Russians made another grand attack on the allies, chiefly on the British, but were once more splendidly repulsed. The plateau of Inkerman was the principal scene of the struggle. It was occupied by the Guards and a few British regiments, on whom fell, until General Bosquet with his French was able to come to their assistance, the task of resisting a Russian army. This was the severest and the fiercest engagement of the campaign. The loss to the English was 2,612, of whom 145 were officers. The French lost about 1,700. The Russians were believed to have lost 12,000 men; but at no time could any clear account be obtained of the Russian losses. It

was believed that they brought a force of 50,000 men to the attack. Inkerman was described at the time as the soldiers' battle. Strategy, it was said everywhere, there was none. The attack was made under cover of a dark and drizzling mist. The battle was fought for a while almost absolutely in the dark. There was hardly any attempt to direct the allies by any principles of scientific warfare. The soldiers fought stubbornly a series of hand-to-hand fights, and we are entitled to say that the better men won in the end. We fully admit that it was a soldiers' battle. All the comment we have to make upon the epithet is, that we do not exactly know which of the engagements fought in the Crimea was anything but a soldiers' battle. Of course with the soldiers we take the officers. A battle in the Crimea with which generalship had anything particular to do has certainly not come under the notice of this writer. Mr. Kinglake tells that at Alma Marshal St. Arnaud, the French Commander-in-Chief, addressing General Canrobert and Prince Napoleon, said—'With such men as you, I have no orders to give; I have but to point to the enemy.' This seems to have been the general principle on which the commanders conducted the campaign. There were the enemy's forces—let the men go at them any way they could. Nor, under the circumstances, could anything much better have been done. When orders were given it appeared more than once as if things would have gone better without them. The soldier won his battle always. No general could prevent him from doing that.

Meanwhile what were people saying in England? They were indignantly declaring that the whole campaign was a muddle. It was evident now that Sebastopol was not going to fall all at once; it was evident too that the preparations had been made on the assumption that it must fall at once. To make disappointment more bitter at home, the public had been deceived for a few days by a false report of the taking of Sebastopol; and the disappointment naturally increased the impatience and dissatisfaction of Englishmen. The fleet that had been sent out to the Baltic came back without having accomplished anything in particular; and although there really was nothing in particular that it could have accomplished under the circumstances, yet many people were as angry as if it had culpably allowed the enemy to escape it on the open seas. The sailing of the Baltic fleet had indeed been preceded by ceremonials especially calculated to make any enterprise ridiculous which failed to achieve some startling success. It was put under the command of Sir Charles Napier, a brave old salt of the fast-fading school of Smollett's Commodore Trunnion—rough, dashing, bull-headed, likely enough to succeed where sheer force and courage could win victories, but wanting in all the intellectual qualities of a commander, and endowed with a violent tongue and an almost unmatched

indiscretion. Sir Charles Napier was a member of a family famed for its warriors; but he had not anything like the capacity of his cousin the other Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Scinde, or the intellect of Sir William Napier, the historian of the Peninsular War. He had won some signal and surprising successes in the Portuguese civil war and in Syria; all under conditions wholly different and with an enemy wholly different from those he would have to encounter in the Baltic. But the voice of admiring friends was tumultuously raised to predict splendid things for him before his fleet had left its port, and he himself quite forgot, in his rough self-confidence, the difference between boasting when one is taking off his armour and boasting when one is only putting it on. His friends entertained him at a farewell dinner at the Reform Club. Lord Palmerston was present and Sir James Graham, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and a great deal of exuberant nonsense was talked. Lord Palmerston, carried away by his natural *bonhomie* and his high animal spirits, showered the most extravagant praises upon the gallant admiral, intermixed with jokes which set the company laughing consumedly, but which read by the outer public next day seemed unbecoming preludes to an expedition that was to be part of a great war and of terrible national sacrifices. The one only thing that could have excused the whole performance would have been some overwhelming success on the part of him who was its hero. But it is not probable that a Dundonald, or even a Nelson, could have done much in the Baltic just then; and Napier was not a Dundonald or a Nelson. The Baltic fleet came home safely after a while, its commander having brought with him nothing but a grievance which lasted him all the remainder of his life. The public were amazed, scornful, wrathful; they began to think that they were destined to see nothing but failure as the fruit of the campaign. In truth, they were extravagantly impatient. Perhaps they were not to be blamed. Their leaders, who ought to have known better, had been filling them with the idea that they had nothing to do but to sweep the enemy from sea and land.

The temper of a people thus stimulated and thus disappointed is almost always indiscriminating and unreasonable in its censure. The first idea is to find a victim. The victim on whom the anger of a large portion of the public turned in this instance was the Prince Consort. The most absurd ideas, the most cruel and baseless calumnies, were in circulation about him. He was accused of having out of some inscrutable motive made use of all his secret influence to prevent the success of the campaign. He was charged with being in a conspiracy with Prussia, with Russia, with no one knew exactly whom, to weaken the strength of England and secure a triumph for her enemies. Stories were actually told at one time of his

having been arrested for high treason. He had in one of his speeches about this time said that constitutional government was under a heavy trial, and could only pass triumphantly through it if the country would grant its confidence to her Majesty's Government. In this observation, as the whole context of the speech showed, the Prince was only explaining that the Queen's Government were placed at a disadvantage, in the carrying on of a war, as compared with a Government like that of the Emperor of the French, who could act of his own arbitrary will, without check, delay, or control on the part of any Parliamentary body. But the speech was instantly fastened on as illustrating the Prince's settled and unconquerable dislike of all constitutional and popular principles of government. Those who opposed the Prince had not indeed been waiting for his speech at the Trinity House dinner to denounce and condemn him; but the sentence in that speech to which reference has been made opened upon him a new torrent of hostile criticism. The charges which sprang of this heated and unjust temper on the part of the public did not indeed long prevail against the Prince Consort. When once the subject came to be taken up in Parliament it was shown almost in a moment that there was not the slightest ground or excuse for any of the absurd surmises and cruel suspicions which had been creating so much agitation. The agitation collapsed in a moment. But while it lasted it was both vehement and intense, and gave much pain to the Prince, and far more pain still to the Queen his wife.

We have seen more lately and on a larger scale something like the phenomenon of that time. During the war between France and Germany the people of Paris went nearly wild with the idea that they had been betrayed, and were clamorous for victims to punish anywhere or anyhow. To many calm Englishmen this seemed monstrously unreasonable and unworthy; and the French people received from English writers many grave rebukes and wise exhortations. But the temper of the English public at one period of the Crimean War was becoming very like that which set Paris wild during the disastrous struggle with Germany. The passions of peoples are, it is to be feared, very much alike in their impulses and even in their manifestations; and if England during the Crimean War never came to the wild condition into which Paris fell during the later struggle, it is perhaps rather because, on the whole, things went well with England, than in consequence of any very great superiority of Englishmen in judgment and self-restraint over the excitable people of France. Certainly, those who remember what we may call the dark days of the Crimean campaign, when disappointment following on extravagant confidence had incited popular passion to call for some victim, will find themselves slow to set a limit to the lengths that passion might have reached if the Russians had actually been successful even in one or two battles.

The winter was gloomy at home as well as abroad. The news constantly arriving from the Crimea told only of devastation caused by foes far more formidable than the Russians—sickness, bad weather, bad management. The Black Sea was swept and scourged by terrible storms. The destruction of transport-ships laden with winter stores for our men was of incalculable injury to the army. Clothing, blanketing, provisions, hospital necessaries of all kinds, were destroyed in vast quantities. The loss of life among the crews of the vessels was immense. A storm was nearly as disastrous in this way as a battle. On shore the sufferings of the army were unspeakable. The tents were torn from their pegs and blown away. The officers and men were exposed to the bitter cold and the fierce stormy blasts. Our soldiers had for the most part little experience or even idea of such cold as they had to encounter this gloomy winter. The intensity of the cold was so great that no one might dare to touch any metal substance in the open air with his bare hand under penalty of leaving the skin behind him. The hospitals for the sick and wounded at Scutari were in a wretchedly disorganised condition. They were for the most part in an absolutely chaotic condition as regards arrangement and supply. In some instances medical stores were left to decay at Varna, or were found lying useless in the holds of vessels in Balaklava Bay, which were needed for the wounded at Scutari. The medical officers were able and zealous men; the stores were provided and paid for so far as our Government was concerned; but the stores were not brought to the medical men. These had their hands all but idle, their eyes and souls tortured by the sight of sufferings which they were unable to relieve for the want of the commonest appliances of the hospital. The most extraordinary instances of blunder and confusion were constantly coming to light. Great consignments of boots arrived, and were found to be all for the left foot. Mules for the conveyance of stores were contracted for and delivered, but delivered so that they came into the hands of the Russians and not of us. Shameful frauds were perpetrated in the instance of some of the contracts for preserved meat. 'One man's preserved meat,' exclaimed *Punch* with bitter humour, 'is another man's poison.' The evils of the hospital disorganisation were happily made a means of bringing about a new system of attending to the sick and wounded in war which has already created something like a revolution in the manner of treating the victims of battle. Mr. Sidney Herbert, horrified at the way in which things were managed in Scutari and the Crimea, applied to a distinguished woman who had long taken a deep interest in hospital reform to superintend personally the nursing of the soldiers. Miss Florence Nightingale was the daughter of a wealthy English country gentleman. She had

chosen not to pass her life in fashionable or æsthetic inactivity, and had from a very early period turned her attention to sanitary questions. She had studied nursing as a science and a system; had made herself acquainted with the working of various continental institutions; and about the time when the war broke out she was actually engaged in reorganising the Sick Governesses' Institution in Harley Street, London. To her Mr. Sidney Herbert turned. He offered her, if she would accept the task he proposed, plenary authority over all the nurses, and unlimited power of drawing on the Government for whatever she might think necessary to the success of her undertaking. Miss Nightingale accepted the task, and went out to Scutari accompanied by some women of rank like her own and a trained staff of nurses. They speedily reduced chaos into order; and from the time of their landing in Scutari there was at least one department of the business of war which was never again a subject of complaint. The spirit of the chivalric days had been restored under better auspices for its abiding influence. Ladies of rank once more devoted themselves to the service of the wounded; and the end was come of the Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Prig type of nurse. Sidney Herbert, in his letter to Miss Nightingale, had said that her example, if she accepted the task he proposed, would 'multiply the good to all time.' These words proved to have no exaggeration in them. We have never seen a war since in which women of education and of genuine devotion have not given themselves up to the task of caring for the wounded. The Geneva Convention and the bearing of the Red Cross are among the results of Florence Nightingale's work in the Crimea.

But the siege of Sebastopol was meanwhile dragging heavily along; and sometimes it was not quite certain which ought to be called the besieged—the Russians in the city or the allies encamped in sight of it. During some months the allied armies did little or nothing. The commissariat system and the land transport system had broken down. The armies were miserably weakened by sickness. Cholera was ever and anon raging anew among our men. Horses and mules were dying of cold and starvation. The roads were only deep irregular ruts filled with mud; the camp was a marsh; the tents stood often in pools of water; the men had sometimes no beds but straw dripping with wet; and hardly any bed coverings. Our unfortunate Turkish allies were in a far more wretched plight than even we ourselves. The authorities who ought to have looked after them were impervious to the criticisms of special correspondents and unassailable by Parliamentary votes of censure. A condemnation of the latter kind was hanging over our Government. Lord John Russell became impressed with the conviction that the Duke of Newcastle was

not strong enough for the post of War Minister, and he wrote to Lord Aberdeen urging that the War Department should be given to Lord Palmerston. Lord Aberdeen replied that although another person might have been a better choice when the appointments were made in the first instance, yet, in the absence of any proved defect or alleged incapacity, there was no sufficient ground for making a kind of speculative change. Parliament was called together before Christmas; and after the Christmas recess Mr. Roebuck gave notice that he would move for a select committee to inquire into the condition of the army before Sebastopol and into the conduct of those departments of the Government whose duty it had been to minister to the wants of the army. Lord John Russell did not believe for himself that the motion could be conscientiously resisted; but as it necessarily involved a censure upon some of his colleagues, he did not think he ought to remain longer in the Ministry, and he therefore resigned his office. The sudden resignation of the leader of the House of Commons was a death-blow to any plans of resistance by which the Government might otherwise have thought of encountering Mr. Roebuck's motion. Lord Palmerston, although Lord John Russell's course was a marked tribute to his own capacity, had remonstrated warmly with Russell by letter as to his determination to resign. 'You will have the appearance,' he said, 'of having remained in office aiding in carrying on a system of which you disapprove until driven out by Roebuck's announced notice, and the Government will have the appearance of self-condemnation by flying from a discussion which they dare not face; while as regards the country the action of the Executive will be paralysed for a time in a critical moment of a great war, with an impending negotiation, and we shall exhibit to the world a melancholy spectacle of disorganisation among our political men at home similar to that which has prevailed among our military men abroad.' The remonstrance, however, came too late, even if it could have had any effect at any time. Mr. Roebuck's motion came on, and was resisted with vigour by Lord Palmerston and Mr. Gladstone. Lord Palmerston insisted that the responsibility ought to fall not on the Duke of Newcastle, but on the whole Cabinet; and with a generosity which his keenest opponents might have admitted to be characteristic of him, he accepted the task of defending an Administration whose chief blame was in the eyes of most persons that they had not given the control of the war into his hands. Mr. Gladstone declared that the inquiry sought for by the resolution could lead to nothing but 'confusion and disturbance, increased disasters, shame at home and weakness abroad; it would convey no consolation to those whom you seek to aid, but it would carry malignant joy

to the hearts of the enemies of England.' The House of Commons was not to be moved by any such argument or appeal. The one pervading idea was that England had been endangered and shamed by the break-down of her army organisation. When the division took place 305 members voted for Mr. Roebuck's motion and only 148 against. The majority against Ministers was therefore 157. Everyone knows what a scene usually takes place when a Ministry is defeated in the House of Commons. Cheering again and again renewed, counter-cheers of defiance, wild exultation, vehement indignation, a whole whirlpool of various emotions seething in that little hall in St. Stephen's. But this time there was no such outburst. The House could hardly realise the fact that the Ministry of all the talents had been thus completely and ignominiously defeated. A dead silence followed the announcement of the numbers. Then there was a half-breathless murmur of amazement and incredulity. The Speaker repeated the numbers, and doubt was over. It was still uncertain how the House would express its feelings. Suddenly some one laughed. The sound gave a direction and a relief to perplexed, pent-up emotion. Shouts of laughter followed. Not merely the pledged opponents of the Government laughed. Many of those who had voted with Ministers found themselves laughing too. It seemed so absurd, so incongruous, this way of disposing of the great Coalition Government. Many must have thought of the night of fierce debate, little more than two years before, when Mr. Disraeli, then on the verge of his fall from power and realising fully the strength of the combination against him, consoled his party and himself for the imminent fatality awaiting them by the defiant words, 'I know that I have to face a Coalition; the combination may be successful. A combination has before this been successful; but coalitions, though they may be successful, have always found that their triumphs have been brief. This I know, that England does not love coalitions.' Only two years had passed and the great Coalition had fallen, overwhelmed with reproach and popular indignation, and amid sudden shouts of laughter.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE CLOSE OF THE WAR.

On February 15, 1855, Lord Palmerston wrote to his brother: 'A month ago if any man had asked me to say what was one of the most improbable events, I should have said my being Prime Minister. Aberdeen was there, Derby was the head of one great party, John Russell of the other; and yet in about ten days' time they all gave way like straws before the

wind; and so here am I, writing to you from Downing Street as First Lord of the Treasury.'

No doubt Lord Palmerston was sincere in the expression of surprise which he have quoted; but there were not many other men in the country who felt in the least astonished at the turn of events by which he had become Prime Minister. Indeed it had long become apparent to almost everyone that his assuming that place was only a question of time. The country was in that mood that it would absolutely have somebody at the head of affairs who knew his own mind and saw his way clearly before him. When the Coalition Ministry broke down, Lord Derby was invited by the Queen to form a Government. He tried and failed. He did all in his power to accomplish the task with which the Queen had entrusted him. He invited Lord Palmerston to join him, and it was intimated that if Palmerston consented Mr. Disraeli would waive all claim to the leadership of the House of Commons, in order that Palmerston should have that place. Lord Derby also offered, through Lord Palmerston, places in his Administration to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert. Palmerston did not see his way to join a Derby Administration, and without him Lord Derby could not go on. The Queen then sent for Lord John Russell; but Russell's late and precipitate retreat from his office had discredited him with most of his former colleagues; and he found that he could not get a Government together. Lord Palmerston was then, to use his own phrase, *l'inévitable*. There was not much change in the *personnel* of the Ministry. Lord Aberdeen was gone, and Lord Palmerston took his place; and Lord Panmure, who had formerly as Fox Maule administered the affairs of the army, succeeded the Duke of Newcastle. Lord Panmure, however, combined in his own person the functions, up to that time absurdly separated, of Secretary-at-War and Secretary-for-War. The Secretary-at-War under the old system was not one of the principal Secretaries of State. He was merely the officer by whom the regular communication was kept up between the War Office and the Ministry, and has been described as the civil officer of the army. The Secretary-for-War was commonly entrusted with the Colonial department as well. The two War Offices were now made into one. It was hoped that by this change great benefit would come to our whole army system. Lord Palmerston acted energetically too in sending out a sanitary commission to the Crimea, and a commission to superintend the commissariat, a department that, almost more than any other, had broken down. Nothing could be more strenuous than the terms in which Lord Palmerston recommended the sanitary commission to Lord Raglan. He requested that Lord Raglan would give the commissioners every assistance in his power. 'They will, of course, be

opposed and thwarted by the medical officers, by the men who have charge of the port arrangements, and by those who have the cleaning of the camp. Their mission will be ridiculed, and their recommendations and directions set aside, unless enforced by the peremptory exercise of your authority. But that authority I must request you to exert in the most peremptory manner for the immediate and exact carrying into execution whatever changes of arrangement they may recommend; for these are matters on which depend the health and lives of many hundreds of men, I may indeed say of thousands.' Lord Palmerston was strongly pressed by some of the more strenuous Reformers of the House. Mr. Layard, who had acquired some celebrity before in a very different field, as a discoverer, that is to say, in the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, was energetic and incessant in his attacks on the administration of the war, and was not disposed even now to give the new Government a moment's rest. Mr. Layard was a man of a certain rough ability, immense self-sufficiency, and indomitable egotism. He was not in any sense an eloquent speaker; he was singularly wanting in all the graces of style and manner. But he was fluent, he was vociferous, he never seemed to have a moment's doubt on any conceivable question, he never admitted that there could by any possibility be two sides to any matter of discussion. He did really know a great deal about the East at a time when the habit of travelling in the East was comparatively rare. He stamped down all doubt or difference of view with the overbearing dogmatism of Sir Walter Scott's Touchwood, or of the proverbial man who has been there and ought to know; and he was in many respects admirably fitted to be the spokesman of all those, and they were not a few, who saw that things had been going wrong without exactly seeing why, and were eager that something should be done, although they did not clearly know what. Lord Palmerston strove to induce the House not to press for the appointment of the committee recommended in Mr. Roebuck's motion. The Government, he said, would make the needful inquiries themselves. He reminded the House of Richard II.'s offer to lead the men of the fallen Tyler's insurrection himself; and in the same spirit he offered on the part of the Government to take the lead in every necessary investigation. Mr. Roebuck, however, would not give way, and Lord Palmerston yielded to a demand which had undoubtedly the support of a vast force of public opinion. The constant argument of Mr. Layard had some sense in it: the Govermnent now in office was very much like the Government in which the House had declared so lately that it had no confidence. It could hardly, therefore, be expected that the House should accept its existence as guarantee enough that everything should be done which its predecessor had failed to do. Lord Pal-

merston gave way, but his unavoidable concession brought on a new ministerial crisis. Sir James Graham, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Sidney Herbert declined to hold office any longer. They had opposed the motion for an inquiry most gravely and strenuously, and they would not lend any countenance to it by remaining in office. Sir Charles Wood succeeded Sir James Graham as First Lord of the Admiralty; Lord John Russell took the place of Secretary for the Colonies, vacated by Sidney Herbert; and Sir George Cornewall Lewis followed Mr. Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Meanwhile new negotiations for peace, set on foot under the influence of Austria, had been begun at Vienna, and Lord John Russell had been sent there to represent the interests of England. The Conference opened at Vienna under circumstances that might have seemed especially favourable to peace. We had got a new ally, a State not indeed commanding any great military strength, but full of energy and ambition, and representing more than any other perhaps the tendencies of liberalism and the operation of the comparatively new principle of the rights of nationalities. This was the little kingdom of Sardinia, whose government was then under the control of one of the master-spirits of modern politics; a man who belonged to the class of the Richelieus and the Orange Williams, the illustrious Count Cavour. Sardinia, it may be frankly said, did not come into the alliance because of any particular sympathies that she had with one side or the other of the quarrel between Russia and the Western Powers. She went into the war in order that she might have a *locus standi* in the councils of Europe from which to set forth her grievances against Austria. In the marvellous history of the uprise of the kingdom of Italy there is a good deal over which, to use the words of Carlyle, moralities not a few must shriek aloud. It would not be easy to defend on high moral principles the policy which struck into a war without any particular care for either side of the controversy, but only to serve an ulterior and personal, that is to say, national purpose. But regarding the policy merely by the light of its results, it must be owned that it was singularly successful and entirely justified the expectations of Cavour. The Crimean War laid the foundations of the kingdom of Italy.

That was one fact calculated to inspire hopes of a peace. The greater the number and strength of the Allies, the greater obviously the pressure upon Russia and the probability of her listening to reason. But there was another event of a very different nature, the effect of which seemed at first likely to be all in favour of peace. This was the death of the man whom the united public opinion of Europe regarded as the author of the war. On March 2, 1855, the Emperor Nicholas of Russia died of pul-

monary apoplexy, after an attack of influenza. In other days it would have been said he had died of a broken heart. Perhaps the description would have been more strictly true than the terms of the medical report. It was doubtless the effect of utter disappointment, of the wreck and ruin of hopes to which a life's ambition had been directed and a life's energy dedicated, which left that frame of adamant open to the sudden dart of sickness. One of the most remarkable illustrations of an artist's genius devoted to a political subject was the cartoon which appeared in *Punch*, and which was called 'General Février turned Traitor.' The Emperor Nicholas had boasted that Russia had two generals on whom she could always rely—General Janvier and General Février; and now the English artist represented General February, a skeleton in Russian uniform, turning traitor and laying his bony ice-cold hand on the heart of the sovereign and betraying him to the tomb. But, indeed, it was not General February alone who doomed Nicholas to death. The Czar died of broken hopes; of the recklessness that comes from defeat and despair. He took no precautions against cold and exposure; he treated with a magnanimous disdain the remonstrances of his physicians and his friends. As of Max Piccolomini in Schiller's noble play, so of him: men whispered that he wished to die. The Alma was to him what Austerlitz was to Pitt. From the moment when the news of that defeat was announced to him he no longer seemed to have hope of the campaign. He took the story of the defeat very much as Lord North took the surrender of Cornwallis—as if a bullet had struck him. Thenceforth he was like one whom the old Scotch phrase would describe as *fey*; one who moved, spoke and lived under the shadow of coming death, until the death came.

The news of the sudden death of the Emperor created a profound sensation in England. Mr. Bright, at Manchester, shortly after rebuked what he considered an ignoble levity in the manner of commenting on the event among some of the English journals; but it is right to say that on the whole nothing could have been more decorous and dignified than the manner in which the English public generally received the news that the country's great enemy was no more. At first there was, as we have said, a common impression that Nicholas's son and successor, Alexander II., would be more anxious to make peace than his father had been. But this hope was soon gone. The new Czar could not venture to show himself to his people in a less patriotic light than his predecessor. The prospects of the Allies were at the time remarkably gloomy. There must have seemed to the new Russian Emperor considerable ground for the hope that disease, and cold, and bad management would do more harm to the army of England at least than any Russian general could do. The Conference

at Vienna proved a failure, and even in some respects a *fiasco*. Lord John Russell, sent to Vienna as our representative, was instructed that the object he must hold in view was the admission of Turkey into the great family of European States. For this end there were four principal points to be considered: the condition of the Danubian Principalities, the free navigation of the Danube, the limitation of Russian supremacy in the Black Sea, and the independence of the Porte. It was on the attempt to limit Russian supremacy in the Black Sea that the negotiations became a failure. Russia would not consent to any proposal which could really have the desired effect. She would agree to an arrangement between Turkey and herself, but this was exactly what the Western Powers were determined not to allow. She declined to have the strength of her navy restricted; and proposed as a counter-resolution that the Straits should be opened to the war flags of all nations, so that if Russia were strong as a naval Power in the Black Sea, other Powers might be just as strong if they thought fit. Lord Palmerston, in a letter to Lord John Russell, drily characterised this proposition, involving as it would the maintenance by England and France of permanent fleets in the Black Sea to counterbalance the fleet of Russia, as a '*mauvaise plaisanterie*.' Lord Palmerston indeed believed no more in the sincerity of Austria throughout all these transactions than he did in that of Russia. The Conference proved a total failure, and in its failure it involved a good deal of the reputation of Lord John Russell. Like the French representative, M. Drouyn de Lhuys, Lord John Russell had been taken by the proposals of Austria and had supported them in the first instance; but when the Government at home would not have them he was still induced to remain a member of the Cabinet and even to condemn in the House of Commons the recommendations he had supported at Vienna. He was charged by Mr. Disraeli with having encouraged the Russian pretensions by declaring at a critical point of the negotiations that he was disposed to favour whatever arrangement would best preserve the honour of Russia. 'What has the representative of England,' Mr. Disraeli indignantly asked, 'to do with the honour of Russia?' Lord John had indeed a fair reply. He could say with justice and good sense that no settlement was likely to be lasting which simply forced conditions upon a great power like Russia without taking any account of what is considered among nations to be her honour. But he was not able to give any satisfactory explanation of his having approved the conditions in Vienna which he afterwards condemned in Westminster. He explained in Parliament that he did in the first instance regard the Austrian propositions as containing the possible basis of a satisfactory and lasting peace; but that as the Government would not hear of them he had

rejected them against his own judgment; and that he had afterwards been converted to the opinion of his colleagues and believed them inadmissible in principle. This was a sort of explanation more likely to alarm than to reassure the public. What manner of danger, it was asked on all sides, may we not be placed in when our representatives do not know their own minds as to proper terms of peace; when they have no opinion of their own upon the subject, but are loud in approval of certain conditions one day which they are equally loud in condemning the next? There was a general impression throughout England that some of our statesmen in office had never been sincerely in favour of the war from the first; that even still they were cold, doubtful, and half-hearted about it, and that the honour of the country was not safe in such hands. The popular instinct, whether it was right as to facts or not, was perfectly sound as to inferences. We may honour, in many instances we must honour, the conscientious scruples of a public man who distrusts the objects and has no faith in the results of some war in which his people are engaged. But such a man has no business in the Government which has the conduct of the war. The men who are to carry on a war must have no doubt of its rightfulness of purpose, and must not be eager to conclude it on any terms. In the very interests of peace itself they must be resolute to carry on the war until it has reached the end they sought for.

Lord John Russell's remaining in office after these disclosures was practically impossible. Sir E. B. Lytton gave notice of a direct vote of censure on 'the Minister charged with the negotiations at Vienna.' But Russell anticipated the certain effect of a vote in the House of Commons by resigning his office. This step at least extricated his colleagues from any share in the censure, although the recriminations that passed on the occasion in Parliament were many and bitter. The vote and censure was however withdrawn. Sir William Molesworth, one of the most distinguished of the school who were since called Philosophical Radicals, succeeded him as Colonial Secretary; and the Ministry carried one or two triumphant votes against Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Roebuck, and other opponents, or at least unfriendly critics. Meanwhile the Emperor of the French and his wife had paid a visit to London and had been received with considerable enthusiasm. The Queen seems to have been very favourably impressed by the Emperor. She sincerely admired him, and believed in his desire to maintain peace as far as possible, and to do his best for the promotion of liberal principles and sound economic doctrines throughout Europe. The beauty and grace of the Empress likewise greatly won over Queen Victoria. The Prince Consort seems to have been less impressed. He was indeed a believer in the sincerity and good disposition of the Em-

peror, but he found him strangely ignorant on most subjects, even the modern political history of England and France. During the visit of the Royal Family of England to France, and now while the Emperor and Empress were in London, the same impression appears to have been left on the mind of the Prince Consort. He also seems to have noticed a certain barrack-room flavour about the Emperor's *entourage* which was not agreeable to his own ideas of dignity and refinement. The Prince Consort appears to have judged the Emperor almost exactly as we know now that Prince Bismarck did then, and as impartial opinion has judged him everywhere in Europe since that time.

The operations in the Crimea were renewed with some vigour. The English army lost much by the death of its brave and manly Commander-in-Chief, Lord Raglan. He was succeeded by General Simpson, who had recently been sent out to the Crimea as Chief of the Staff, and whose administration during the short time that he held the command was at least well qualified to keep Lord Raglan's memory green and to prevent the regret for his death from losing any of its keenness. The French army had lost its first commander long before—the versatile, reckless, brilliant soldier of fortune, St. Arnaud, whose broken health had from the opening of the campaign prevented him from displaying any of the qualities which his earlier career gave men reason to look for under his command. After St. Arnaud's death the command was transferred for a while to General Canrobert, who, finding himself hardly equal to the task, resigned it in favour of General Pélissier. The Sardinian contingent had arrived and had given admirable proof of its courage and discipline. On August 16, 1855, the Russians, under General Liprandi, made a desperate effort to raise the siege of Sebastopol by an attack on the allied forces. The attack was skilfully planned during the night, and was made in great strength. The French divisions had to bear the principal weight of the attack; but the Sardinian contingent also had a prominent place in the resistance, and bore themselves with splendid bravery and success. The attempt of the Russians was completely foiled; and all Northern Italy was thrown into wild delight by the news that the flag of Piedmont had been carried to victory over the troops of one great European Power, and side by side with those of two others. The unanimous voice of the country now approved and acclaimed the policy of Cavour, which had been sanctioned only by a very narrow majority, had been denounced from all sides as reckless and senseless, and had been carried out in the face of the most tremendous difficulties. It was the first great illustration of Cavour's habitual policy of blended audacity and cool far-seeing judgment. It is a curious fact that the suggestion to send Sardinian troops to the Crimea did

not originate in Cavour's own busy brain. The first thought of it came up in the mind of a woman, Cavour's niece. The great statesman was struck with the idea from the moment when she suggested it. He thought over it deeply, resolved to adopt it, and carried it to triumphant success.

The repulse of the Tchernaya was a heavy, indeed a fatal stroke for the Russians. The siege had been progressing for some time with considerable activity. The French had drawn their lines nearer and nearer to the besieged city. The Russians, however, had also been throwing up fresh works, which brought them nearer to the lines of the allies, and sometimes made the latter seem as if they were the besieged rather than the besiegers. The Malakoff tower and the Mamelon battery in front of it became the scenes and the objects of constant struggle. The Russians made desperate night-sorties again and again, and were always repulsed. On June 7 the English assaulted the quarries in front of the Redan, and the French attacked the Mamelon. The attack on both sides was successful; but it was followed on the 18th of the same month by a desperate and wholly unsuccessful attack on the Redan and Malakoff batteries. There was some misapprehension on the side of the French commander, which led to a lack of precision and unity in the carrying out of the enterprise, and it became, therefore, a failure on the part of both the allies. A pompous and exulting address was issued by Prince Gortschakoff, in which he informed the Russian army that the enemy had been beaten, driven back with enormous loss; and announced that the hour was approaching 'when the pride of the enemy will be lowered, their armies swept from our soil like chaff blown away by the wind.'

On September 5 the Allies made an attack almost simultaneously upon the Malakoff and the Redan. It was agreed that as soon as the French had got possession of the Malakoff the English should attack the Redan, the hoisting of the French flag on the former fort to be the signal for our men to move. The French were brilliantly successful in their part of the attack, and in a quarter of an hour from the beginning of the attempt the flag of the Empire was floating on the parapets. The English then at once advanced upon the Redan; but it was a very different task from that which the French had had to undertake. The French were near the Malakoff; the English were very far away from the Redan. The distance our soldiers had to traverse left them almost helplessly exposed to the Russian fire. They stormed the parapets of the Redan despite all the difficulties of their attack; but they were not able to hold the place. The attacking party were far too small in numbers; reinforcements did not come in time; the English held their own for an hour against odds

that might have seemed overwhelming; but it was simply impossible for them to establish themselves in the Redan, and the remnant of them that could withdraw had to retreat to the trenches. It was only the old story of the war. Superb courage and skill of officers and men; outrageously bad generalship. The attack might have been renewed that day, but the English Commander-in-Chief, General Simpson, declared with *naïveté* that the trenches were too crowded for him to do anything. Thus the attack failed because there were too few men, and could not be renewed because there were too many. The cautious commander resolved to make another attempt the next morning. But before the morrow came there was nothing to attack. The Russians withdrew during the night from the south side of Sebastopol. A bridge of boats had been constructed across the bay to connect the north and the south sides of the city, and across this bridge Prince Gortschakoff quietly withdrew his troops. The bombardment kept up by the Allies had been so terrible and so close for several days, and their long-range guns were so entirely superior to anything possessed by or indeed known to the Russians, that the defences of the south side were being irreparably destroyed. The Russian general felt that it would be impossible for him to hold the city much longer, and that to remain there was only useless waste of life. But, as he said in his own despatch, 'it is not Sebastopol which we have left to them, but the burning ruins of the town, which we ourselves set fire to, having maintained the honour of the defence in such a manner that our great grandchildren may recall with pride the remembrance of it and send it on to all posterity.' It was some time before the Allies could venture to enter the abandoned city. The arsenals and powder-magazines were exploding, the flames were bursting out of every public building and every private house. The Russians had made of Sebastopol another Moscow.

With the close of that long siege, which had lasted nearly a year, the war may be said to have ended. The brilliant episode of Kars, its splendid defence and its final surrender, was brought to its conclusion, indeed, after the fall of Sebastopol; but, although it naturally attracted peculiar attention in this country, it could have no effect on the actual fortunes of such a war. Kars was defended by Colonel Fenwick Williams, an English officer, who had been sent, all too late, to reorganise the Turkish forces in Armenia after they had suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of the Russians. Never probably had a man a more difficult task than that which fell to the lot of Williams. He had to contend against official stupidity, corruption, delay; he could get nothing done without having first to remove whole mountains of obstruction, and to quicken into life and movement an apathy which seemed like that of a paralysed

system. He concentrated his efforts at last upon the defence of Kars, and he held the place against overwhelming Russian forces, and against an enemy far more appalling, starvation itself. With his little garrison he repelled a tremendous attack of the Russian army under General Mouravieff, in a battle that lasted nearly seven hours, and as the result of which the Russians left on the field more than five thousand dead. He had to surrender at last to famine; but the very articles of surrender to which the conqueror consented became the trophy of Williams and his men. The garrison were allowed to leave the place with all the honours of war; and, 'as a testimony to the valorous resistance made by the garrison of Kars, the officers of all ranks are to keep their swords.' Williams and his English companions, Colonel Lake, Major Teesdale, Major Thompson, and Dr. Sandwith, had done as much for the honour of their country at the close of the war as Butler and Nasmyth and Ballard had done at its opening. The curtain of that great drama rose and fell upon a splendid scene of English heroism.

The war was virtually over. Austria had been exerting herself throughout its progress in the interests of peace, and after the fall of Sebastopol she made a new effort with greater success. Two of the belligerents were indeed now anxious to be out of the struggle almost on any terms. These were France and Russia. The new Emperor of Russia was not a man personally inclined for war; nor had he his father's overbearing and indomitable temper. He could not but see that his father had greatly overrated the military strength and resources of his country. He had accepted the war only as a heritage of necessary evil, with little hope of any good to come of it to Russia; and he welcomed any chance of ending it on fair terms. France, or at least her Emperor, was all but determined to get back again into peace. If England had held out, it is highly probable that she would have had to do so alone. For this indeed Lord Palmerston was fully prepared as a last resource, sooner than submit to terms which he considered unsatisfactory. He said so and he meant it. 'I can fancy,' Lord Palmerston wrote to Lord Clarendon in his bright good-humoured way, 'how I should be hooted in the House of Commons if I were to get up and say that we had agreed to an imperfect and unsatisfactory arrangement. . . . I had better beforehand take the Chiltern Hundreds.' Lord Palmerston, however, had no occasion to take the Chiltern Hundreds; the Congress of Paris opened on February 26, 1856, and on March 30 the treaty of peace was signed by the plenipotentiaries of the Great Powers. Prussia had been admitted to the Congress, which therefore represented England, France, Austria, Prussia, Turkey and Sardinia.

The treaty began by declaring that Kars was to be restored to the Sultan, and that Sebastopol and all other places taken by the Allies were to be given back to Russia. The Sublime Porte was admitted to participate in all the advantages of the public law and system of Europe. The other Powers engaged to respect the independence and territorial integrity of Turkey. They guaranteed in common the strict observance of that engagement, and announced that they would in consequence consider any act tending to a violation of it as a question of general interest. The Sultan issued a firman for ameliorating the condition of his Christian subjects, and communicated to the other Powers the purposes of the firman 'emanating spontaneously from his sovereign will.' No right of interference, it was distinctly specified, was given to the other Powers by this concession on the Sultan's part. The article of the treaty which referred to the Black Sea is of especial importance. 'The Black Sea is neutralised; its waters and its ports, thrown open to the mercantile marine of every nation, are formally and in perpetuity interdicted to the flag of war either of the Powers possessing its coasts or of any other Power, with the exceptions mentioned in articles fourteen and nineteen.' The exceptions only reserved the right of each of the Powers to have the same number of small armed vessels in the Black Sea to act as a sort of maritime police and to protect the coasts. The Sultan and the Emperor engaged to establish and maintain no military or maritime arsenals in that sea. The navigation of the Danube was thrown open. In exchange for the towns restored to him, and in order more fully to secure the navigation of the Danube, the Emperor consented to a certain rectification of his frontier in Bessarabia, the territory ceded by Russia to be annexed to Moldavia under the suzerainty of the Porte. Moldavia and Wallachia, continuing under the suzerainty of the Sultan, were to enjoy all the privileges and immunities they already possessed under the guarantee of the contracting Powers, but with no separate right of intervention in their affairs. The existing position of Servia was assured. A convention respecting the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus was made by all the Powers. By this convention the Sultan maintained the ancient rule prohibiting ships of war of foreign Powers from entering the Straits so long as the Porte is at peace. During time of peace the Sultan engaged to admit no foreign ships of war into the Bosphorus or the Dardanelles. The Sultan reserved to himself the right as in former times of delivering firmans of passage for light vessels under the flag of war employed in the service of foreign Powers—that is to say, of their diplomatic missions. A separate convention as to the Black Sea between Russia and Turkey agreed that the contracting parties should have in that sea six light steam

vessels of not more than 800 tons, and four steam or sailing vessels of not more than 200 tons each.

Thus the controversies about the Christian provinces, the Straits, and the Black Sea were believed to be settled. The great central business of the Congress, however, was to assure the independence and the territorial integrity of Turkey, now admitted to a place in the family of European States. As it did not seem clear to those most particularly concerned in bringing about this result that the arrangements adopted in full congress had been sufficient to guarantee Turkey from the enemy they most feared, there was a tripartite treaty afterwards agreed to between England, France, and Austria. This document bears date in Paris April 15, 1856; by it the contracting parties guaranteed jointly and severally the independence and integrity of the Ottoman empire, and declared that any infraction of the general treaty of March 30 would be considered by them as *casus belli*. It is probable that not one of the three contracting parties was quite sincere in the making of this treaty. It appears to have been done, at the instigation of Austria, much less for the sake of Turkey than in order that she might have some understanding of a special kind with some of the Great Powers, and thus avoid the semblance of isolation which she now especially dreaded, having Russia to fear on the one side, and seeing Italy already raising its head on the other. England did not particularly care about the tripartite treaty, which was pressed upon her, and which she accepted trusting that she might never have to act upon it; and France accepted it without any liking for it, probably without the least intention of ever acting on it.

The Congress was also the means of bringing about a treaty between England and France and Sweden. By this engagement Sweden undertook not to cede to Russia any part of her present territories or any rights of fishery; and the two other Powers agreed to maintain Sweden by force against aggression.

The Congress of Paris was remarkable too for the fact that the Plenipotentiaries before separating came to an agreement on the subject of the right of search and the rules generally of maritime war. They agreed to the four following declarations. 'First: privateering is and remains abolished. Second: the neutral flag covers enemies' goods, with the exception of contraband of war. Third: neutral goods, with the exception of contraband of war, are not liable to capture under an enemy's flag. Fourth: blockades in order to be binding must be effective; that is to say, maintained by a force sufficient really to prevent access to the enemy's coast.' At the opening of the war Great Britain had already virtually given up the claims she once made against neutrals, and which were indeed

untenable in the face of modern civilisation. She gladly agreed therefore to ratify so far as her declaration went the doctrines which would abolish for ever the principle upon which those and kindred claims once rested. It was agreed, however, that the rules adopted at the Congress of Paris should only be binding on those States that had acceded or should accede to them. The Government of the United States had previously invited the great European Powers by a circular to assent to the broad doctrine that free ships make free goods. At the instance of England it was answered that the adoption of that doctrine must be conditional on America's renouncing the right of privateering. To this the United States raised some difficulty, and the declarations of the Congress were therefore made without America's assenting to them.

With many other questions too the Congress of Paris occupied itself. At the instigation of Count Cavour the condition of Italy was brought under its notice; and there can be no doubt that out of the Congress and the part that Sardinia assumed as representative of Italian nationality came the great succession of events which ended in the establishment of a King of Italy in the palace of the Quirinal. The adjustment of the condition of the Danubian Principalities too engaged much attention and discussion, and a highly ingenious arrangement was devised for the purpose of keeping those provinces from actual union, so that they might be coherent enough to act as a rampart against Russia, without being so coherent as to cause Austria any alarm for her own somewhat disjointed, not to say distracted, political system. All these artificial and complex arrangements presently fell to pieces, and the Principalities became in course of no very long time an independent State under a hereditary prince. But for the hour it was hoped that the independence of Turkey and the restriction of Russia, the security of the Christian provinces, the neutrality of the Black Sea, and the closing of the Straits against war vessels, had been bought by the war.

England lost some twenty-four thousand men in the war; of whom hardly a sixth fell in battle or died of wounds. Cholera and other diseases gave grim account of the rest. Forty-one millions of money were added by the campaign to the National Debt. Not much, it will be seen, was there in the way of mere military glory to show for the cost. Our fleets had hardly any chance of making their power felt. The ships of the Allies took Bomarsund in the Baltic, and Kinburn in the Black Sea, and bombarded several places; but the war was not one that gave a chance to a Nelson, even if a Nelson had been at hand. Among the accidental and unpleasant consequences of the campaign it is worth mentioning the quarrel in which England became involved with the United States because of our Foreign Enlistment Act.

At the close of December, 1854, Parliament hurriedly passed an Act authorising the formation of a Foreign Legion for service in the war, and some Swiss and Germans were recruited who never proved of the slightest service. Prussia and America both complained that the zeal of our recruiting functionaries outran the limits of discretion and of law. One of our consuls was actually put on trial at Cologne; and America made a serious complaint of the enlistment of her citizens. England apologised; but the United States were out of temper and insisted on sending our minister, Mr. Crampton, away from Washington, and some little time passed before the friendly relations of the two States were completely restored.

So the Crimean War ended. It was one of the unlucky accidents of the hour that the curtain fell in the Crimea upon what may be considered a check to the arms of England. There were not a few in this country who would gladly have seen the peace negotiations fail, in order that England might thereby have an opportunity of reasserting her military supremacy in the eyes of Europe. Never during the campaign, nor for a long time before it, had England been in so excellent a condition for war, as she was when the warlike operations suddenly came to an end. The campaign had, indeed, only been a training time for us after the unnerving relaxation of a long peace. We had learned some severe lessons from it; and not unnaturally there were impatient spirits who chafed at the idea of England's having no opportunity of putting these lessons to account. It was but a mere chance that prevented us from accomplishing the capture of the Redan, despite the very serious disadvantages with which we were hampered in our enterprise as compared with our allies and their simultaneous operation. With just a little better generalship the Redan would have been taken; as it was, even with the generalship that we had the next attempt would not have been likely to fail. But the Russians abandoned Sebastopol, and our principal ally was even more anxious for peace than the enemy; and we had no choice but to accept the situation. The war had never been popular in France. It had never had even that amount of popularity which the French people accorded to their Emperor's later enterprise, the campaign against Austria. Louis Napoleon had had all he wanted. He had been received into the society of European sovereigns, and he had made what the French public were taught to consider a brilliant campaign. It is surprising to anyone who looks calmly back now on the history of the Crimean War to find what an extravagant amount of credit the French army obtained by its share in the operations. Even in this country it was at the time an almost universal opinion that the French succeeded in everything they tried; that their system was perfect; that their tactics were beyond improvement; that they were a contrast to us in

every respect. Much of this absurd delusion was no doubt the result of a condition of things among us which no reasonable Englishman would exchange for all the imaginary triumphs that a court historiographer ever celebrated. It was due to the fact that our system was open to the criticism of every pen that chose to assail it. Not a spot in our military organisation escaped detection and exposure. Every detail was keenly criticised; every weakness was laid open to public observation. We invited all the world to see where we were failing and what were the causes of our failure. Our journals did the work for the military system of England that Matthew Arnold says Goethe did for the political and social systems of Europe—struck its finger upon the weak places, 'and said thou ailest here and here.' While the official and officious journals of the French empire were sounding pæans to the honour of the Emperor and his successes, to his generals, his officers, his commissariat, his transport service, his soldiers, his camp, pioneers and all; our leading papers of all shades of politics were only occupied in pointing out defects, and blaming those who did not instantly remedy them. Unpatriotic conduct, it may be said. Ay, truly, if the conduct of the doctor be unfriendly when he tells that we have the symptoms of failing health, and warns us to take some measures for rest and renovation. Some of the criticisms of the English press were undoubtedly inaccurate and rash. But their general effect was bracing, healthful, successful. Their immediate result was that which has already been indicated, to leave the English army at the close of the campaign far better able to undertake prolonged and serious operations of war than it had been at any time during the campaign's continuance. For the effect of the French system on the French army we should have to come down a little later in history and study the workings of Imperialism as they displayed themselves in the confidence, the surprises, and the collapse of 1870.

Still there was a feeling of disappointment in this country at the close of the war. This was partly due to dissatisfaction with the manner in which we had carried on the campaign, and partly to distrust of its political results. Our soldiers had done splendidly; but our generals and our system had done poorly indeed. Only one first-class reputation of a military order had come out of the war, and that was by the common consent of the world awarded to a Russian—to General Todleben, the defender of Sebastopol. No new name was made on our side or on that of the French; and some promising or traditional reputations were shattered. The political results of the war were to many minds equally unsatisfying. We had gone into the enterprise for two things—to restrain the aggressive and aggrandising spirit of Russia, and to secure the integrity and independence of Turkey as a Power capable of upholding herself with credit

among the States of Europe. Events which happened more than twenty years later will have to be studied before anyone can form a satisfactory opinion as to the degree of success which attended each of these objects. For the present, it is enough to say that there was not among thoughtful minds at the time a very strong conviction of success either way. Lord Aberdeen had been modest in his estimate of what the war would do. He had never had any heart in it, and he was not disposed to exaggerate its beneficent possibilities. He estimated that it might perhaps secure peace in the East of Europe for some twenty-five years. His modest expectation was prophetic. Indeed, it a little overshot the mark. Twenty-two years after the close of the Crimean campaign Russia and Turkey were at war again.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE LITERATURE OF THE REIGN. FIRST SURVEY.

The close of the Crimean War is a great landmark in the reign of Queen Victoria. This, therefore, is a convenient opportunity to cast a glance back upon the literary achievements of a period so markedly divided in political interest from any that went before it. The reign of Queen Victoria is the first in which the constitutional and Parliamentary system of government came fairly and completely into recognition. It is also the reign which had the good fortune to witness the great modern development in all that relates to practical invention, and more especially in the application of science to the work of making communication rapid between men. On land and ocean, in air and under the sea, the history of rapid travel and rapid interchange of message coincides with that of the present reign. Such a reign ought to have a distinctive literature. So, in truth, it has. Of course it is somewhat bold to predict long and distinct renown for contemporaries or contemporary schools. But it may perhaps be assumed, without any undue amount of speculative venturesomeness, that the age of Queen Victoria will stand out in history as the period of a literature as distinct from others as the age of Elizabeth or Anne; although not perhaps equal in greatness to the latter, and far indeed below the former. At the opening of Queen Victoria's reign a great race of literary men had come to a close. It is curious to note how sharply and completely the literature of Victoria separates itself from that of the era whose heroes were Scott, Byron, and Wordsworth. Before Queen Victoria came to the throne, Scott, Byron, Coleridge, and Keats were dead. Wordsworth lived, indeed, for many years after; so did Southey and Moore; and Savage Landor died much later still. But Wordsworth,

Southey, Moore, and Landor had completed their literary work before Victoria came to the throne. Not one of them added a cubit or an inch to his intellectual stature from that time; some of them even did work which distinctly proved that their day was done. A new and fresh breath was soon after breathed into literature. Nothing, perhaps, is more remarkable about the better literature of the age of Queen Victoria than its complete severance from the leadership of that which had gone before it, and its evidence of a fresh and genuine inspiration. It is a somewhat curious fact, too, very convenient for the purposes of this history, that the literature of Queen Victoria's time thus far divides itself clearly enough into two parts. The poets, novelists, and historians who were making their fame with the beginning of the reign had done all their best work and made their mark before these later years, and were followed by a new and different school, drawing inspiration from wholly different sources, and challenging comparison as antagonists rather than disciples.

We speak now only of literature. In science the most remarkable developments were reserved for the later years of the reign. We use the words 'remarkable developments' in the historical rather than in the scientific sense. It would be hardly possible to overrate the benefits conferred upon science and the world by some of the scientific men who made the best part of their fame in the earlier years of the reign. Some great names at once start to the memory. We think of Brewster, the experimental philosopher, who combined in so extraordinary a degree the strictest severity of scientific argument and form with a freedom of fancy and imagination which lent picturesqueness to all his illustrations and invested his later writings especially with an indefinable charm. We think of Michael Faraday, the chemist and electrician, who knew so well how to reconcile the boldest researches into the heights and deeps of science with the sincerest spirit of faith and devotion; the memory of whose delightful improvisations on the science he loved to expound must remain for ever with all who had the privilege of hearing the unrivalled lecturer deliver his annual discourses at the Royal Institution. It is not likely that the name of Sir John Herschel, a gifted member of a gifted family, would be forgotten by anyone taking even the hastiest glance at the science of our time—a family of whom it may truly be said, in slight alteration of Wordsworth's praise of Milton, that their souls were with the stars, and dwelt apart. Richard Owen's is, in another field of knowledge, a great renown. Owen had been called the Cuvier of England, and the Newton of natural history, and there cannot be any doubt that his researches and discoveries as an anatomist and palæontologist have marked a distinct era in the development of the study to which

he devoted himself. Hugh Miller, the author of 'The Old Red Sandstone' and 'The Testimony of the Rocks,' the devotee and unfortunately the martyr of scientific inquiry, brought a fresh and brilliant literary ability, almost as untutored and spontaneous as that of his immortal countryman Robert Burns, to bear on the exposition of the studies to which he literally sacrificed his life. If, therefore, we say that the later period of Queen Victoria's reign is more remarkable in science than the former, it is not because we would assert that the men of this later day contributed in richer measure to the development of human knowledge, and especially of practical science, than those of the earlier time. But it was in the later period that the scientific controversies sprang up and the school arose which will be, in the historian's sense, most closely associated with the epoch. The value of the labours of men like Owen and Faraday and Brewster is often to be appreciated thoroughly by scientific students alone. What they have done is to be recorded in the history of science rather than in the general and popular history of a day. But the school of scientific thought which Darwin founded and in which Huxley and Tyndall taught is the subject of a controversy which may be set down as memorable in the history of the world. All science and all common life accepted with gratitude and without contest the contributions made to our knowledge by Faraday and Brewster; but the theories of Darwin divided the scientific world, the religious world, and indeed all society, into two hostile camps, and so became an event in history which the historian can no more pass over than in telling of the growth of the United States he could omit any mention of the great Civil War. Even in dealing with the growth of science it is on the story of battles that the attention of the outer world must to the end of time be turned with the keenest interest. This is, one might almost think, a scientific law in itself, with which it would be waste of time to quarrel.

The earlier part of the reign was richer in literary genius than the later has thus far been. Of course the dividing line which we draw is loosely drawn, and may sometimes appear to be capricious. Some of those who won their fame in the earlier part continued active workers, in certain instances steadily adding to their celebrity, through the succeeding years. The figure of Thomas Carlyle is familiar still to all who live in the neighbourhood of Chelsea. It was late in the reign of Victoria that Stuart Mill came out for the first time on a public platform in London, after a life divided between official work and the most various reading and study; a life divided too between the seclusion of Blackheath and the more poetic seclusion of Avignon, among the nightingales whose song was afterwards so sweet to his dying ears. He came, strange and shy,

into a world which knew him only in his books, and to which the gentle and grave demeanour of the shrinking and worn recluse seemed out of keeping with the fearless brain and heart which his career as a thinker proved him to have. The reign had run for forty years when Harriet Martineau was taken from that beautiful and romantic home in the bosom of the lake country to which her celebrity had drawn so many famous visitors for so long a time. The renown of Dickens began with the reign, and his death was sadly premature when he died in his quaint and charming home at Gad's Hill, in the country of Falstaff and Prince Hal, some thirty-three years after. Mrs. Browning passed away very prematurely; but it might well be contended that the fame, or at least the popularity, of Robert Browning belongs to this later part of the reign even though his greatest work belongs to the earlier. The author of the most brilliant and vivid book of travel known in our modern English, 'Eothen,' made a sudden renown in the earlier part of the reign, and achieved a new and a different sort of repute as the historian of the Crimean War during the later part. Still, if we take the close of the Crimean War as an event dividing the reign thus far into two parts, we shall find that there does seem a tolerably clear division between the literature of the two periods. We have therefore put in this first part of our history the men and women who had distinctly made their mark in these former years, and who would have been famous if from that time out they had done nothing more. It is with this division borne in mind that we describe the reign as more remarkable in the literature of the earlier and in the science of these later years. It is not rash to say that, although poets, historians and novelists of celebrity came afterwards and may come yet, the literature of our time gave its measure, as the French phrase is, in that earlier period.

Alike in its earlier passages and in its later the reign is rich in historical labours. The names of Grote, Macaulay and Carlyle occur at once to the mind when we survey the former period. Mr. Grote's history of Greece is indeed a monumental piece of work. It has all that patience and exhaustive care which principally mark the German historians, and it has an earnestness which is not to be found generally in the representatives of what Carlyle has called the Dryasdust school. Grote threw himself completely into the life and politics of Athens. It was said of him with some truth that he entered so thoroughly into all the political life of Greece as to become now and then the partisan of this or that public man. His own practical acquaintance with politics was undoubtedly of great service to him. We have all grown somewhat tired of hearing the words of Gibbon quoted in which he tells us that 'the discipline and evolutions of a modern battalion gave me a clearer notion of the

phalanx and the legion; and the captain of the Hampshire Grenadiers (the reader may smile) has not been useless to the historian of the Roman Empire.' Assuredly the practical knowledge of politics which Grote acquired during the nine or ten years of his Parliamentary career was of much service to the historian of Greece. It has been said indeed of him that he never could quite keep from regarding the struggles of parties in Athens as exactly illustrating the principles disputed between the Liberals and the Tories in England. It does not seem to us, however, that his political career affected his historical studies in any way, but by throwing greater vitality and nervousness into his descriptions of Athenian controversies. The difference between a man who has mingled anywhere in the active life of politics and one who only knows that life from books and the talk of others, is specially likely to show itself in such a study as Grote's history. His political training enabled Grote to see in the statesmen and soldiers of the Greek peoples men and not trees walking. It taught him how to make the dry bones live. Mr. Grote began life as what would have been called in later years a Philosophical Radical. He was a close friend of Stuart Mill, although he did not always agree with Mill in his opinions. During his Parliamentary career he devoted himself for the most part to the advocacy of the system of vote by ballot. He brought forward a motion on the subject every session as Mr. Charles Villiers did at one time for the repeal of the Corn Laws. He only gave up the House of Commons in order that he might be free to complete his great history. He did not retain all his radical opinions to the end of his life so thoroughly as Mill did, but owned with a certain regret that in many ways his views had undergone modification, and that he grew less and less ardent for political change; less hopeful, we may suppose, of the amount of good to be done for human happiness and virtue by the spread and movement of what are now called advanced opinions. It must be owned that it takes a very vigorous and elastic mind to enable a man to resist the growth of that natural and physical tendency towards conservatism or reaction which comes with advancing years. It is as well for society on the whole that this should be so, and that the elders as a rule should form themselves into a guard to challenge very pertinaciously all the eager claims and demands for change made by hopeful and restless youth. No one would more readily have admitted the advantage that may come from this common law of life than Grote's friend, Mill; although Mill remained to the close of his career as full of hope in the movement of liberal opinions as he had been in his boyhood; still, to quote from some noble words of Schiller, 'reverencing as a man the dreams of his youth.' In his later years Grote withdrew from all connection with active political controversy, and was

indeed curiously ignorant of the very bearings of some of the greatest questions around the settlement of which the passions and interests of another hemisphere were brought into fierce and vast dispute.

We have already had occasion more than once to speak of Macaulay, the great Parliamentary debater and statesman. It is the less necessary to say much of him as an historian; for Macaulay will be remembered rather as a man who could do many things brilliantly than as the author of a history. Yet Macaulay's 'History of England,' whatever its defects, is surely entitled to rank as a great work. We do not know whether grave scholars will regard it as to the honour of the book or the reverse, that it was by far the most popular historical essay ever produced by an Englishman. The successive volumes of Macaulay's 'History of England,' were run after as the Waverley Novels might have been at the zenith of their author's fame. Living England talked for the time of nothing but Macaulay's 'England.' Certainly history had never before in our country been treated in a style so well calculated to render it at once popular, fascinating, and fashionable. Every chapter glittered with vivid and highly coloured description. On almost every page was found some sentence of glowing eloquence or gleaming antithesis, which at once lent itself to citation and repetition. Not one word of it could have failed to convey its meaning. The whole stood out in an atmosphere clear, bright, and incapable of misty illusion as that of a Swiss lake in summer. No shade or faint haze of a doubt appeared anywhere. The admirer of Macaulay had all the comfort in his studies that a votary of the Roman Catholic Church may have. He had an infallible guide. He had no need to vex himself with doubt, speculation, or even conjecture. This absolute certainty about everything was, beyond question, one great source of Macaulay's popularity. That resolute conviction which readers of a more intellectual class are especially inclined to distrust has the same charm for the ordinary reader that it has for children, who never care to hear any story if they suppose the narrator does not know all about it in such a way as to render question or contradiction impossible. But although this was one of the causes of Macaulay's popularity, it was not the most substantial cause. The brilliancy of his style, the variety and aptness of his illustrations, and the animated manner in which he contrived to set his ideas of men, places, and events before the reader—these were among the sources of success to which his admirers must look with the greatest satisfaction. It is of late somewhat the fashion to disparage Macaulay. He was a popular idol so long that, in the natural course of things, it has come to him to have his title to worship, or even to faith, very generally questioned. To be unreasonably admired by one generation is to incur the certainty of being unreasonably disparaged

by the next. The tendency of late is to assume that because Macaulay was brilliant he must necessarily be superficial. But Macaulay was not superficial. He was dogmatic; he was full of prejudice; he was in all respects a better advocate than judge; he was wanting in the calm impartial balancing faculty which an historian of the highest class ought to have; but he was not superficial. No man could make out a better and a stronger case for any side of a controversy which he was led to espouse. He was not good at drawing or explaining complex characters. He loved indeed to picture contradictory and paradoxical characters. Nothing delighted him more than to throw off an animated description of some great person, who having been shown in the first instance to possess one set of qualities in extreme prominence, was then shown to have a set of exactly antagonistic qualities in quite equal prominence. This was not describing a complex character. It was merely embodying a paradox. It was to 'solder close,' as Timon of Athens says, 'impossibilities and make them kiss.' There was something too much of trick about this, although it was often done with so much power as to bewilder the better judgment of the calmest reader. But where Macaulay happened to be right in his view of a man or an event, he made his convictions clear with an impressiveness and a brilliancy such as no modern writer has surpassed. The world owes him something for having protested, by precept and example, against the absurd notion that the 'dignity of history' required of historians to be grave, pompous, and dull. He was not a Gibbon, but he wrote with all Gibbon's delight in the picturesqueness of a subject, and Gibbon's resolve to fascinate as well as to instruct his readers. Macaulay's history tries too much to be an historical portrait gallery. The dangers of such a style do not need to be pointed out. They are amply illustrated in Macaulay's sparkling pages. But it is something to know that their splendid qualities are far more conspicuous still than their defects. Perhaps very recent readers of history too may feel disposed to be grateful to Macaulay for having written without any profound philosophical theory to expound. He told history like a story. He warmed up as he went along, and grew enamoured, as a romancist does, of this character and angry with that other. No doubt he frequently thus did harm to the trustworthiness of his narrative where it had to deal with disputed questions, although he probably enhanced the charms of his animated style. But he did not set out with a mission to expound some theory as to a race or a tendency, and therefore pledged beforehand to bend all facts of the physical, the political, and the moral world to the duty of bearing witness for him and proclaiming the truth of his message to mankind.

Macaulay was not exactly what the Germans would call a many-sided

man. He never was anything but the one Macaulay in all he did or attempted. But he did a great many things well. Nothing that he ever attempted was done badly. He was as successful in the composition of a pretty valentine for a little girl as he was in his history, his essays, his 'Lays of Ancient Rome,' and his Parliamentary speeches. In everything he attempted he went very near to that success which true genius achieves. In everything he just fell short of that achievement. But he so nearly attained it that the reader who takes up one of Macaulay's books or speeches for the first time is almost sure to believe, under the influence of the instant impression, that the genuine inspiration is there. Macaulay is understood to have for a long time thought of writing a romance. If he had done so, we may feel sure that many intelligent readers would have believed on the first perusal of it that it was almost on a level with Scott, and only as the first impression gradually faded, and they came to read it over again, have found out that Macaulay was not a Scott in fiction any more than he was a Burke in eloquence or a Gibbon in history. He filled for a long time a larger space in the public mind than any other literary man in England, and his style greatly affected literary men. But his influence did not pierce deeply down into public feeling and thought as that of one or two other men of the same period undoubtedly did, and does still. He did not impress the very soul of English feeling as Mr. Carlyle, for example, has done.

No influence suffused the age from first to last more strongly than that of Thomas Carlyle. England's very way of thinking was at one time profoundly affected by Carlyle. He introduced the English people to the great German authors, very much as Lessing had introduced the Germans to Shakespeare and the old English ballads. Carlyle wrote in a style which was so little like that ordinarily accepted as English, that the best thing to be said for it was that it was not exactly German. At one time it appeared to be so completely moulded on that of Jean Paul Richter, that not a few persons doubted whether the new comer really had any ideas of his own. But Carlyle soon proved that he could think for himself; and he very often proved it by thinking wrong. There was in him a strong, deep vein of the poetic. Long after he had evidently settled down to be a writer of prose and nothing else, it still seemed to many that his true sphere was poetry. The grim seriousness which he had taken from his Scottish birth and belongings was made hardly less grim by the irony which continually gleamed or scowled through it. Truth and force were the deities of Carlyle's especial worship. 'The eternal verities' sat on the top of his Olympus. To act out the truth in life and make others act it out would require some force more strong, ubiquitous, and pene-

trating than we can well obtain from the slow deliberations of an ordinary Parliament, with its debates and divisions and everlasting formulas. Therefore, to enforce his eternal verities, Carlyle always preached up and yearned for the strong man, the poem in action, whom the world in our day had not found, and perhaps could not appreciate. If this man were found, it would be his duty and his privilege to drill us all as in some vast camp, and compel us to do the right thing to his dictation. It cannot be doubted that this preaching of the divine right of force had a serious and sometimes a very detrimental effect upon the public opinion of England. It degenerated often into affectation, alike with the teacher and the disciples. But the influence of Carlyle in preaching earnestness and truth, in art and letters and everything else, had a healthy and very remarkable effect entirely outside the regions of the moralist, who in this country at least has always taught the same lesson. It is not probable that individual men were made much more truthful in England by Carlyle's glorification of the eternal verities than they would have been without it. But his influence on letters and art was peculiar, and was not evanescent. Carlyle is distinctly the founder of a school of history and a school of art. In the meanwhile we may regard him simply as a great author, and treat his books as literary studies and not as gospels. Thus regarded, we shall find that he writes in a style which every sober critic would feel bound to condemn, but which, nevertheless, the soberest critic is forced continually, despite of himself and his rules, to admire. For, out of the strange jargon which he seems to have deliberately adopted, Carlyle has undoubtedly constructed a wonderfully expressive medium in which to speak his words of remonstrance and admonition. It is a mannerism, but a mannerism into which a great deal of the individuality of the man seems to have entered. It is not wholly affectation or superficiality. Carlyle's own soul seems to speak out in it more freely and strenuously than it would in the ordinary English of society and literature. No tongue, says Richter, is eloquent save in its own language; and this strange language which he has made for himself does really appear to be the native tongue of Carlyle's powerful and melancholy eloquence. Carlyle is endowed with a marvellous power of depicting stormy scenes and rugged daring natures. At times strange wild piercing notes of the pathetic are heard through his strenuous and fierce bursts of eloquence like the wail of a clarion thrilling between the blasts of a storm. His history of the French Revolution is history read by lightning. Of this remarkable book John Stuart Mill supplied the principal material; for Mill at one time thought of writing a history of the Revolution himself, but, giving up the idea, placed the materials he had collected at the service of Carlyle. Carlyle used the

materials in his own way. He is indebted to no one for his method of making up his history. With all its defects, the book is one of the very finest our age has produced. Its characters stand out like portraits by Rembrandt. Its crowds live and move. The picture of Mirabeau is worthy of the hand of the great German poet who gave us Wallenstein. But Carlyle's style has introduced into this country a thoroughly false method of writing history. It is a method which has little regard for the 'dry light' which Bacon approved. It works under the varying glare of coloured lights. Its purpose is to express scorn of one set of ideas and men, and admiration of another. Given the man we admire, then all his doings and ways must be admirable; and the historian proceeds to work this principle out. Carlyle's Mirabeau is as truly a creature of romance as the Monte Christo of Dumas. This way of going to work became even more apparent, as the mannerisms became more incessant, in Carlyle's later writings—in the 'Frederick the Great,' for example. The reader dares not trust such history. It is of little value as an instructor in the lessons of the times and events it deals with. It only tells us what Carlyle thought of the times and the events, and the men who were the chief actors in them. Nor does Carlyle bequeath many new ideas to the world which he stirred by his stormy eloquence. That falsehood cannot prevail over truth in the end, nor simulacra do the work of realities, is not, after all, a lesson which earth can be said to have waited for up to the nineteenth century and the coming of Carlyle; and yet it would be hard to point to any other philosophical outcome of Mr. Carlyle's teaching. His value is in his eloquence, his power, his passion, and pathos; his stirring and lifelike pictures of human character, whether faithful to the historical originals or not; and the vein of poetry which runs through all his best writings, and sometimes makes even the least sympathetic reader believe that he has to do with a genuine poet.

In strongest contrast to the influence of Carlyle may be set the influence of Mill. Except where the professed teachers of religious creeds are concerned, there can be found no other man in the reign of Victoria who had anything like the influence over English thought that Mill and Carlyle possessed. Mill was a devoted believer in the possibilities of human nature and of liberty. If Rousseau was the apostle of affliction, Mill was surely the apostle of freedom. He believed that human society might be brought to something not far removed from perfection by the influence of education and of freedom acting on the best impulses and disciplining the emotions of men and women. Mill was a strange blending of political economist and sentimentalist. It was not altogether in humorous exaggeration that somebody said he was Adam Smith and

Petrarch in one. The curious seclusion in which he was brought up by his father, the wonderful discipline of study to which in his very infancy he was subjected, would have made something strange and striking out of a commonplace nature; and Mill was in any case a man of genius. There was an antique simplicity and purity about his life which removed him altogether from the ways of ordinary society. But the defect of his teaching as an ethical guide was that he made too little allowance for the influence of ordinary society. He always seemed to act on the principle that with true education and noble example the most commonplace men could be persuaded to act like heroes, and to act like heroes always. The great service which he rendered to the world in his Political Economy and his system of Logic is of course independent of his controverted theories and teachings. These works would, if they were all he had written, place him in the very front rank of English thinkers and instructors. But these only represent half of his influence on the public opinion of his time. His faith in the principle of human liberty led him to originate the movement for what is called the emancipation of women. Opinions will doubtless long differ as to the advantages of the movement, but there can be no possible difference of judgment as to the power and fascination of Mill's advocacy and the influence he exercised. He did not succeed in his admirable essay 'On Liberty' in establishing the rule or principle by which men may decide between the right of free expression of opinion and the right of authority to ordain silence. Probably no precise boundary line can ever be drawn; and in this, as in so much else, lawmakers and peoples must be content with a compromise. But Mill's is at least a noble plea for the fullest possible liberty of utterance; and he has probably carried the argument as far as it ever can be carried. There never was a more lucid and candid reasoner. The most difficult and abstruse questions became clear by the light of his luminous exposition. Something too of human interest and sympathy became infused into the most seemingly arid discussions of political economy by the virtue of his emotional and half poetic nature. It was well said of him that he reconciled political economy with human feeling. His style was clear as light. Mill, said one of his critics, lives in light. Sometimes his language rose to a noble and dignified eloquence; here and there are passages of a grave, keen irony. Into the questions of religious belief which arise in connection with his works it is no part of our business to enter; but it may be remarked that his latest writings seem to show that his views were undergoing much modification in his closing years. His opponents would have allowed as readily as his supporters that no man could have been more sincerely inspired with a desire to arrive at the truth; and that none could

be more resolute to follow the course which his conscience told him to be right. He carried this resolute principle into his warmest controversies, and it was often remarked that he usually began by stating the case of the adversary better than the adversary could have done it for himself. Applying to his own character the same truthful method of inquiry which he applied to others, Mill has given a very accurate description of one at least of the qualities by which he was able to accomplish so much. He tells us in his Autobiography that he had from an early period considered that the most useful part he could take in the domain of thought was that of an interpreter of original thinkers and mediator between them and the public. 'I had always a humble opinion of my own powers as an original thinker, except in abstract science (logic, metaphysics, and the theoretic principles of political economy and politics), but thought myself much superior to most of my contemporaries in willingness and ability to learn from everybody; as I found hardly anyone who made such a point of examining what was said in defence of all opinions, however new or however old, in the conviction that even if they were errors there might be a substratum of truth underneath them, and that in any case the discovery of what it was that made them plausible would be a benefit to truth.' This was not assuredly Mill's greatest merit, but it was perhaps his most peculiar quality. He was an original thinker, despite his own sincere disclaimer; but he founded no new system. He could be trusted to examine and expound any system with the most perfect fairness and candour; and, even where it was least in harmony with his own ideas, to do the fullest justice to every one of its claims.

Harriet Martineau's career as a woman of letters and a teacher began indeed before the reign of Queen Victoria, but it was carried on almost without interruption during nearly forty years of the reign. She was political economist, novelist, historian, biographer, and journalist; and in no path did she fail to make her mark. Few women could have turned to the occupations of a political writer under greater physical disadvantages; and no man in this line of life, however well furnished by nature with physical and intellectual qualifications for success, could have done better work. She wrote some exquisite little stories, and one or two novels of more ambitious character. It is praise enough to give them when we say that, although fiction certainly was not work for which she was most especially qualified, yet what she did seems to be destined to live and hold a place in our literature. She was, so far as we know, the only English woman who ever achieved distinct and great success as a writer of leading articles for a daily newspaper. Her strong prejudices and dislikes prevent her from being always regarded as a trustworthy historian. Her

'History of the Thirty Years' Peace'—for it may be regarded as wholly hers, although Charles Knight began it—is a work full of vigorous thought and clear description, with here and there passages of genuine eloquence. But it is marred in its effect as a trustworthy narrative by the manner in which the authoress yields here and there to inveterate and wholesale dislikes; and sometimes, though not so often or so markedly, to an over-wrought hero-worship. Miss Martineau had to a great extent an essentially masculine mind. She was often reproached with being unfeminine; and assuredly she would have been surprised to hear that there was anything womanish in her way of criticising public events and men. Yet in reading her 'History' one is sometimes amused to find that that partisanship which is commonly set down as a specially feminine quality affects her estimate of a statesman. Hers is not by any means the Carlylean way of starting with a theory and finding all virtue and glory in the man who seems to embody it, and all baseness and stupidity in his opponents. But when she takes a dislike to a particular individual, she seems to assume that where he was wrong he must have been wrong of set malign purpose, and that where he chanced to be in the right it was in mistake, and in despite of his own greater inclination to be in the wrong. It is fortunate that these dislikes are not many, and also that they soon show themselves, and therefore cease to be seriously misleading. In all other respects the book well deserves careful study. The life of the woman is a study still more deeply interesting. Others of her sex there were of greater genius, even in her own time; but no Englishwoman ever followed with such perseverance and success a career of literary and political labour.

'The blue-peter has long been flying at my foremast, and, now that I am in my ninety-second year, I must soon expect the signal for sailing.' In this quaint and cheery way Mary Somerville, many years after the period at which we have now arrived in this work, described her condition and her quiet waiting for death. No one surely could have better earned the right to die by the labours of a long life devoted to the education and the improvement of her kind. Mary Somerville has probably no rival among women as a scientific scholar. Her summary of Laplace's 'Mécanique Céleste,' her treatise on the 'Connection of the Physical Sciences,' and her 'Physical Geography,' would suffice to place any student, man or woman, in the foremost rank of scientific expounders. The 'Physical Geography' is the only one of Mrs. Somerville's remarkable works which was published in the reign of Queen Victoria; but the publication of the other two preceded the opening of the reign by so short a time, and her career and her fame so entirely belong to the Victorian period, that, even if the 'Physical Geography' had never been published, she must be included in this history.

'I was intensely ambitious,' Mrs. Somerville says of herself in her earlier days, 'to excel in something; for I felt in my own breast that women were capable of taking a higher place in creation than that assigned to them in my early days, which was very low.' It is not exaggeration to say that Mrs. Somerville distinctly raised the world's estimate of woman's capacity for the severest and the loftiest scientific pursuits. She possessed the most extraordinary power of concentration, amounting to an entire absorption in the subject which she happened to be studying, to the exclusion of all disturbing sights and sounds. She had in a supreme degree that which Carlyle calls the first quality of genius, an immense capacity for taking trouble. She had also, happily for herself, an immense capacity for finding enjoyment in almost everything: in new places, people, and thoughts; in the old familiar scenes and friends and associations. Hers was a noble, calm, fully-rounded life. She worked as steadfastly and as eagerly in her scientific studies as Harriet Martineau did with her economics and her politics: but she had a more cheery, less sensitive, less eager and impatient nature than Harriet Martineau. She was able to pursue her most intricate calculations after she had passed her ninetieth year; and one of her chief regrets in dying was that she should not 'live to see the distance of the earth from the sun determined by the transit of Venus, and the source of the most renowned of rivers, the discovery of which will immortalise the name of Dr. Livingstone.'

The paths of the two poets who first sprang into fame in the present reign are strangely remote from each other. Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning are as unlike in style and choice of subject, and indeed in the whole spirit of their poetry, as Wordsworth and Byron. Mr. Tennyson deals with incident and picturesque form, and graceful legend, and with so much of doubt and thought and yearning melancholy as would belong to a refined and cultured intellect under no greater stress or strain than the ordinary chances of life among educated Englishmen might be expected to impose. He has revived with great success the old Arthurian legends, and made them a part of the living literature of England. But the knights and ladies whom he paints are refined, graceful, noble, without roughness, without wild or at all events complex and distracting passions. It may perhaps be said that Tennyson has taken for his province all the beauty, all the nobleness, all the feeling that lie near to or on the surface of life and of nature. His object might seem to be that which Lessing declared the true object of all art, 'to delight;' but it is to delight in a somewhat narrower sense than was the meaning of Lessing. Beauty, melancholy, and repose are the elements of Tennyson's poetry. There is no storm, no conflict, no complication. Mr. Browning, on the other hand,

delights in perplexed problems of character and life; in studying the effects of strange contrasting forces of passion coming into play under peculiar and distracting conditions. All that lies beneath the surface; all that is out of the common track of emotion; all that is possible, that is poetically conceivable, but that the outer air and the daily walks of life never see, this is what specially attracts Mr. Browning. In Tennyson a knight of King Arthur's mythical court has the emotions of a polished English gentleman of our day, and nothing more. Mr. Browning would prefer, in treating of a polished English gentleman of our day, to exhibit him under some conditions which should draw out in him all the strange elementary passions and complications of emotion that lie far down in deeps below the surface of the best ordered civilisation. The tendency of the one poet is naturally to fall now and then into the sweetly insipid; of the other to wander away into the tangled regions of the grotesque. It is perhaps only natural that under such conditions the one poet should be profoundly concerned for beauty of form, and the latter almost absolutely indifferent to it. No poet has more finished beauty of style and exquisite charm of melody than Tennyson. None certainly can be more often wanting in grace of form and delight of soft sound than Mr. Browning. There are many passages and even many poems of Browning which show that the poet could be melodious if he would; but he seems sometimes as if he took a positive delight in perplexing the reader's ear with harsh untuneful sounds. Mr. Browning commonly allows the study of the purely psychological to absorb too much of his moods and of his genius. It has a fascination for him which he is seemingly unable to resist. He makes of his poems too often mere searchings into strange deeps of human character and human error. He seldom abandons himself altogether to the inspiration of the poet; he hardly ever deserves the definition of the minstrel given in Goethe's ballad who 'sings but as the song-bird sings.' Moreover, Mr. Browning has an almost morbid taste for the grotesque; he is not unfrequently a sort of poetic Callot. It has to be added that Mr. Browning is seldom easy to understand, and that there are times when he is only to be understood at the expense of as much thought and study as one might give to a controverted passage in an ancient author. This is a defect of art, and a very serious defect. The more devoted of Mr. Browning's admirers will tell us no doubt that the poet is not bound to supply us with brains as well as poetry, and that if we cannot understand what he says it is the fault simply of our stupidity. But an ordinary man who finds that he can understand Shakespeare and Milton, Dryden and Wordsworth, Byron and Keats, without any trouble, may surely be excused if he does not set down his difficulty about some of Browning's poems

wholly to the account of his own dulness. It may well be doubted whether there is any idea so subtle that, if the poet can actually realise it in his own mind clearly for himself, the English language will not be found capable of expressing it with sufficient clearness. The language has been made to do this for the most refined reasonings of philosophical schools, for transcendentalists and utilitarians, for psychologists and metaphysicians. No intelligent person feels any difficulty in understanding what Mill or Herbert Spencer or Huxley means; and it can hardly be said that the ideas Mr. Browning desires to convey to his readers are more difficult of exposition than some of those which the authors we name have contrived to set out with a white light of clearness all round them. The plain truth is that Mr. Browning is a great poet in spite of some of the worst defects that ever stood between a poet and popularity. He is a great poet by virtue of his commanding genius, his fearless imagination, his penetrating pathos. He strikes an iron harpstring. In certain of his moods his poetry is like that of the terrible lyre in the weird old Scottish ballad, the lyre that was made of the murdered maiden's breast-bone, and which told its fearful story in tones 'that would melt a heart of stone.' In strength and depth of passion and pathos, in wild humour, in emotion of every kind, Mr. Browning is much superior to Mr. Tennyson. The Poet Laureate is the completer man. Mr. Tennyson is beyond doubt the most complete of the poets of Queen Victoria's time. No one else has the same combination of melody, beauty of description, culture and intellectual power. He has sweetness and strength in exquisite combination. If a just balance of poetic powers were to be the crown of a poet, then undoubtedly Mr. Tennyson must be proclaimed the greatest English poet of our time. The reader's estimate of Browning and Tennyson will probably be decided by his predilection for the higher effort or for the more perfect art. Browning's is surely the higher aim in poetic art; but of the art which he essays Tennyson is by far the completer master. Tennyson has undoubtedly thrown away much of his sweetness and his exquisite grace of form on mere triflings and pretty conceits; and perhaps as a retribution those poems of his which are most familiar in the popular mouth are just those which least do justice to his genuine strength and intellect. The cheap sentiment of 'Lady Clara Vere de Vere,' the yet cheaper pathos of 'The May Queen,' are in the minds of thousands the choicest representation of the genius of the poet who wrote 'In Memoriam and the 'Morte d'Arthur.' Mr. Browning, on the other hand, has chosen to court the approval of his time on terms of such disadvantage as an orator might who insisted in addressing an assemblage in some tongue which they but imperfectly understood. It is the fault of Mr. Browning

himself if he has for his only audience and admirers men and women of culture, and misses altogether that broad public audience to which most poets have chosen to sing, and which all true poets, one would think, must desire to reach with their song. It is, on the other hand, assuredly Mr. Tennyson's fault if he has by his too frequent condescension to the drawing-room, and even the young ladies' school, made men and women of culture forget for a moment his best things, and credit him with no higher gift than that of singing 'virginibus puerisque.' One quality ought to be mentioned as common to these two poets who have so little else in common. They are both absolutely faithful to nature and truth in their pictures of the earth and its scenes and seasons. Almost all the great poets of the past age, even including Wordsworth himself, were now and then content to generalise nature; to take some things for granted; to use their memory, or the eyes of others, rather than their own eyes, when they had to describe changes on leaf, or sky, or water. It is the characteristic of Tennyson and Browning that they deal with nature in a spirit of the most faithful loyalty. Not the branch of a tree, nor the cry of a bird, nor the shifting colours on sea or sky, will be found described on their pages otherwise than as the eye sees for itself at the season of which the poet tells. In reading Tennyson's description of woodland and forest scenes one might almost fancy that he can catch the exact peculiarities of sound in the rustling and moaning of each separate tree. In some of Mr. Browning's pictures of Italian scenery every detail is so perfect that many a one journeying along an Italian road and watching the little mouse-coloured cattle as they drink at the stream may for the moment almost feel uncertain whether he is looking on a page of living reality or recalling to memory a page from the author of 'The Ring and the Book.' The poets seem to have returned to the fresh simplicity of a far distant age of poetry, when a man described exactly what he saw, and was put to describing it because he saw it. In most of the intermediate times a poet describes because some other poet has described before, and has said that in nature there are such and such beautiful things which every true poet must see, and is bound to acknowledge accordingly in his verse.

These two are the greatest of our poets in the earlier part of the reign; indeed in the reign early or late so far. But there are other poets also of whom we must take account. Mrs. Browning has often been described as the greatest poetess of whom we know anything since Sappho. This description, however, seems to carry with it a much higher degree of praise than it really bears. It has to be remembered that there is no great poetess of whom we know anything from the time of Sappho to that of Mrs. Browning. In England we have hardly had any woman but Mrs. Browning

alone who really deserves to rank with poets. She takes a place altogether different from that of any Mrs. Hemans or such singer of sweet, mild, and innocent note. Mrs. Browning would rank highly among poets without any allowance being claimed for her sex. But estimated in this way, which assuredly she would have chosen for herself, she can hardly be admitted to stand with the foremost even of our modern day. She is one of the most sympathetic of poets. She speaks to the hearts of numbers of readers who think Tennyson all too sweet, smooth, and trivial, and Robert Browning harsh and rugged. She speaks especially to the emotional in woman. In all moods when men or women are distracted by the bewildering conditions of life, when they feel themselves alternately dazzled by its possibilities and baffled by its limitations, the poems of Elizabeth Browning ought to find sympathetic ears. But the poems are not the highest which merely appeal to our own moods and echo our own plaints; and there was not much of creative genius in Mrs. Browning. Her poems are often but a prolonged sob; a burst of almost hysterical remonstrance or entreaty. It must be owned, however, that the egotism of emotion has seldom found such exquisite form of outpouring as in her so-called 'Sonnets from the Portuguese;' and that what the phraseology of a school would call the emotion of 'altruism' has rarely been given forth in tones of such piercing pathos as in 'The Cry of the Children.'

Mr. Matthew Arnold's reputation was made before this earlier period had closed. He is a maker of such exquisite and thoughtful verse that it is hard sometimes to question his title to be considered a genuine poet. On the other hand, it is likely that the very grace and culture and thoughtfulness of his style inspire in many the first doubt of his claim to the name of poet. Where the art is evident and elaborate, we are all too apt to assume that it is all art and not genius. Mr. Arnold is a sort of miniature Goethe; we do not know that his most ardent admirers could demand a higher praise for him, while it is probable that the description will suggest exactly the intellectual peculiarities which lead so many to deny him a place with the really inspired singers of his day. Of the three men whom we have named we should be inclined to say that Mr. Arnold made the very most of his powers, and Mr. Browning the very least. Mr. Arnold is a critic as well as a poet: there are many who relish him more in the critic than in the poet. In literary criticism his judgment is refined, and his aims are always high if his range be not very wide; in politics and theology he is somewhat apt to be at once fastidious and fantastic.

The 'Song of the Shirt' would give Thomas Hood a technical right, if he had none other, to be classed as a poet of the reign of Queen Victoria. The 'Song of the Shirt' was published in *Punch* when the reign was well

on; and after it, appeared 'The Bridge of Sighs'; and no two of Hood's poems have done more to make him famous. He was a genuine though not a great poet, in whom humour was most properly to be defined as Thackeray has defined it—the blending of love and wit. The 'Song of the Shirt' and the 'Bridge of Sighs' made themselves a kind of monumental place in English sympathies. The 'Plea of the Midsummer Fairies' was written several years before. It alone would have made for its author a reputation. The ballad of 'Fair Inez' is almost perfect in its way. The name of Sir Henry Taylor must be included with the poets of this reign, although his best work was done before the reign began. In his work, clear strong intelligence prevails more than the emotional and the sensuous. He makes himself a poet by virtue of intellect and artistic judgment; for there really do seem some examples of a poet being made and not born. We can hardly bring Procter among the Victorian poets. Macaulay's ringing verses are rather the splendid and successful *tours de force* of a clever man than the genuine lyrics of a poet. Arthur Clough was a man of rare promise, whose lamp was extinguished all too soon. Philip James Bailey startled the world by his 'Festus,' and for a time made people believe that a great new poet was coming; but the impression did not last, and Bailey proved to be little more than the comet of a season. A spasmodic school which sprang up after the success of 'Festus,' and which was led by a brilliant young Scotchman, Alexander Smith, passed away in a spasm as it came, and is now almost forgotten. 'Orion,' an epic poem by Richard H. Horne, made a very distinct mark upon the time. Horne proved himself to be a sort of Landor *manqué*—or perhaps a connecting link between the style of Landor and that of Browning. The earlier part of the reign was rich in singers; but the names and careers of most of them would serve rather to show that the poetic spirit was abroad, and that it sought expression in all manner of forms, than that there were many poets to dispute the place with Tennyson and Browning. It is not necessary here to record a list of mere names. The air was filled with the voices of minor singers. It was pleasant to listen to their piping, and the general effect may well be commended; but it is not necessary that the names of all the performers in an orchestra should be recorded for the supposed gratification of a posterity which assuredly would never stop to read the list.

Thirty-six years have passed away since Mr. Ruskin leaped into the literary arena, with a spring as bold and startling as that of Kean on the Kemble-haunted stage. The little volume, so modest in its appearance and self-sufficient in its tone, which the author defiantly flung down like a gage of battle before the world, was entitled, 'Modern Painters: their superiority in the art of Landscape Painting to all the Ancient Masters;

by a Graduate of Oxford.' It was a challenge to established beliefs and prejudices; and the challenge was delivered in the tone of one who felt confident that he could make good his words against any and all opponents. If there was one thing that more than another seemed to have been fixed and rooted in the English mind, it was that Claude and one or two others of the old masters possessed the secret of landscape painting. When, therefore, a bold young dogmatist involved in one common denunciation 'Claude, Gaspar Poussin, Salvator Rosa, Ruysdael, Paul Potter, Canaletto, and the various Van-somethings and Kock-somethings, more especially and malignantly those who have libelled the sea,' it was no wonder that affronted authority raised its indignant voice and thundered at him. Affronted authority, however, gained little by its thunder. The young Oxford Graduate possessed, along with genius and profound conviction, an imperturbable and magnificent self-conceit against which the surges of angry criticism dashed themselves in vain. Mr. Ruskin sprang into literary life simply as a vindicator of the fame and genius of Turner. But as he went on with his task he found, or at least he convinced himself, that the vindication of the great landscape painter was essentially a vindication of all true art. Still further proceeding with his self-imposed task, he persuaded himself that the cause of true art was identical with the cause of truth, and that truth, from Ruskin's point of view, enclosed in the same rules and principles all the morals, all the science, industry, and daily business of life. Therefore, from an art-critic he became a moralist, a political economist, a philosopher, a statesman, a preacher—anything, everything that human intelligence can impel a man to be. All that he has written since his first appeal to the public has been inspired by this conviction: that an appreciation of the truth in art reveals to him who has it the truth in everything. This belief has been the source of Mr. Ruskin's greatest successes and of his most complete and ludicrous failures. It has made him the admiration of the world one week and the object of its placid pity or broad laughter the next. A being who could be Joan of Arc to-day and Voltaire's Pucelle to-morrow would hardly exhibit a stronger psychical paradox than the eccentric genius of Mr. Ruskin sometimes illustrates. But in order to do him justice, and not to regard him as a mere erratic utterer of eloquent contradictions, poured out on the impulse of each moment's new freak of fancy, we must always bear in mind the fundamental faith of the man. Extravagant as this or that doctrine may be, outrageous as to-day's contradiction of yesterday's assertion may sound, yet the whole career is consistent with its essential principles and beliefs. It may be fairly questioned whether Mr. Ruskin has any great qualities but his eloquence and his true, honest love of nature,

As a man to stand up before a society of which one part was fashionably languid and the other part only too busy and greedy, and preach to it of Nature's immortal beauty and of the true way to do her reverence, Ruskin has and had a position of genuine dignity. This ought to be enough for the work and for the praise of any man. But the restlessness of Ruskin's temperament, combined with the extraordinary self-sufficiency which contributed so much to his success where he was master of a subject, sent him perpetually intruding into fields where he was unfit to labour, and enterprises which he had no capacity to conduct. Seldom has a man contradicted himself so often, so recklessly, and so complacently as Mr. Ruskin. It is venturesome to call him a great critic even in art, for he seldom expresses any opinion one day without flatly contradicting it the next. He is a great writer as Rousseau was—fresh, eloquent, audacious, writing out of the fulness of the present mood, and heedless how far the impulse of to-day may contravene that of yesterday. But as Rousseau was always faithful to his idea of truth, so Ruskin is always faithful to Nature. When all his errors and paradoxes and contradictions shall have been utterly forgotten, this will remain to his praise. No man since Wordsworth's brightest days did half so much to teach his countrymen, and those who speak his language, how to appreciate and honour that silent Nature 'which never did betray the heart that loved her.'

In fiction as well as in poetry there are two great names to be compared or contrasted when we turn to the literature of the earlier part of the reign. In the very year of Queen Victoria's accession appeared the 'Pickwick Papers,' the work of the author who the year before had published the 'Sketches by Boz.' The public soon recognised the fact that a new and wonderfully original force had come into literature. The success of Charles Dickens is absolutely unequalled in the history of English fiction. At the season of his highest popularity Sir Walter Scott was not so popular an author. But that happened to Dickens which did not happen to Scott. When Dickens was at his zenith, and when it might have been thought that any manner of rivalry with him was impossible, a literary man, who was no longer young, who had been working with but moderate success for many years in light literature, suddenly took to writing novels, and almost in a moment stepped up to a level with the author of 'Pickwick.' During the remainder of their careers the two men stood as nearly as possible on the same level. Dickens always remained by far the more popular of the two; but, on the other hand, it may be safely said that the opinion of the literary world in general was inclined to favour Thackeray. From the time of the publication of 'Vanity Fair' the two were always put side by side for comparison or contrast. They have been sometimes

likened to Fielding and Smollett, but no comparison could be more misleading or less happy. Smollett stands on a level distinctly and considerably below that of Fielding; but Dickens cannot be said to stand thus beneath Thackeray. If the comparison were to hold at all, Thackeray must be compared to Fielding, for Fielding is not in the least like Dickens; but then it must be allowed that Smollett wants many of the higher qualities of the author of 'David Copperfield.' It is natural that men should compare Dickens and Thackeray; but the two will be found to be curiously unlike when once a certain superficial resemblance ceases to impress the mind. Their ways of treating a subject were not only dissimilar, but were absolutely in contrast. They started, to begin with, under the influence of a totally different philosophy of life, if that is to be called a philosophy which was probably only the result of peculiarity of temperament in each case. Dickens set out on the literary theory that in life everything is better than it looks; Thackeray with the impression that it is worse. In the one case there was somewhat too much of a mechanical interpretation of everything for the best in the best possible world; in the other the savour of cynicism was at times a little annoying. As each writer went on, the peculiarity became more and more of a mannerism. But the writings of Dickens were far more deeply influenced by his peculiarities of feeling or philosophy than those of Thackeray. A large share of the admiration which is popularly given to Dickens is undoubtedly a tribute to what people consider his cheerful view of life. In that too he is especially English. In this country the artistic theory of France and other continental nations, borrowed from the æsthetic principles of Greece, which accords the palm to the artistic treatment rather than to the subject, or the purpose or the way of looking at things, has found hardly any broad and general acceptation. The popularity of Dickens was therefore in great measure due to the fact that he set forth life in cheerful lights and colours. He had of course gifts of far higher artistic value; he could describe anything that he saw with a fidelity which Balzac could not have surpassed; and like Balzac he had a way of inspiring inanimate objects with a mystery and motive of their own which gave them often a weird and fascinating individuality. But it must be owned that if Dickens's peculiar 'philosophy' were effaced from his works the fame of the author would remain a very different thing from what it is at the present moment. On the other hand, it would be possible to cut out of Thackeray all his little cynical, melancholy sentences and reduce his novels to bare descriptions of life and character, without affecting in any sensible degree his influence on the reader or his position in literature. Thackeray had a marvellously keen appreciation of human motive and character within certain limits. If Dickens could draw

an old quaint house or an odd family interior as faithfully and yet as picturesquely as Balzac, so on the other hand not Balzac himself could analyse and illustrate the weaknesses and foibles of certain types of character with greater subtlety of judgment and force of exposition than Thackeray. Dickens had little or no knowledge of human character, and evidently cared very little about the study. His stories are fairy tales made credible by the masterly realism with which he described all the surroundings and accessories, the costumes and the ways of his men and women. While we are reading of a man whose odd peculiarities strike us with a sense of reality as if we had observed them for ourselves many a time, while we see him surrounded by streets and houses which seem to us rather more real and a hundred times more interesting than those through which we pass every day, we are not likely to observe very quickly or to take much heed of the fact when we do observe it, that the man acts on various important occasions of his life as only people in fairy stories ever do act. Thackeray, on the other hand, cared little for descriptions of externals. He left his readers to construct for themselves the greater part of the surroundings of his personages from his description of the characters of the personages themselves. He made us acquainted with the man or woman in his chapters as if we had known him or her all our life; and knowing Pendennis or Becky Sharp, we had no difficulty in constructing the surroundings of either for ourselves. Thus it will be seen that these two eminent authors had not only different ideas about life, but absolutely contrasting principles of art. One worked from the externals inward; the other realised the unseen, and left the externals to grow of themselves. Three great peculiarities, however, they shared. Each lived and wrote of and for London. Dickens created for art the London of the middle and poorer classes; Thackeray did the same for the London of the upper class and for those who strive to imitate their ways. Neither ever even attempted to describe a man kept constantly above and beyond the atmosphere of mere egotism by some sustaining greatness or even intensity of purpose. In Dickens, as in Thackeray, the emotions described are those of conventional life merely. This is not to be said in disparagement of either artist. It is rather a tribute to an artist's knowledge of his own capacity and sphere of work that he only attempts to draw what he thoroughly understands. But it is proper to remark of Dickens and of Thackeray, as of Balzac, that the life they described was, after all, but the life of a coterie or a quarter, and that there existed side by side with their field of work a whole world of emotion, aspiration, struggle, defeat and triumph, of which their brightest pages do not give a single suggestion. This is the more curious to observe because of the third peculiarity which Dickens and Thackeray had in common—a love for the purely ideal and romantic in

fiction There are many critics who hold that Dickens in 'Barnaby Rudge' and the 'Tale of Two Cities,' Thackeray in 'Esmond,' exhibited powers which vindicated for their possessors a very rare infusion of that higher poetic spirit which might have made of both something greater than the painters of the manners of a day and a class. But to paint the manners of a day and a class as Dickens and Thackeray have done is to deserve fame and the gratitude of posterity. The age of Victoria may claim in this respect an equality at least with that of the reign which produced Fielding and Smollett; for if there are some who would demand for Fielding a higher place on the whole than can be given either to Dickens or to Thackeray, there are not many, on the other hand, who would not say that either Dickens or Thackeray is distinctly superior to Smollett. The age must claim a high place in art which could in one department alone produce two such competitors. Their effect upon their time was something marvellous. People talked Dickens or thought Thackeray.

Passion, it will be seen, counted for little in the works of Dickens and Thackeray. Dickens, indeed, could draw a conventionally or dramatically wicked man with much power and impressiveness; and Thackeray could suggest certain forms of vice with wonderful delicacy and yet vividness. But the passions which are common to all human natures in their elementary moods made but little play in the novels of either writer. Both were in this respect, for all their originality and genius in other ways, highly and even exclusively conventional. There was apparently a sort of understanding in the mind of each—indeed Thackeray has admitted as much in his preface to 'Pendennis'—that men and women were not to be drawn as men and women are known to be, but with certain reserves to suit conventional etiquette. It is somewhat curious that the one only novel-writer who during the period we are now considering came into any real rivalry with them was one who depended on passion altogether for her material and her success. The novels of a young woman, Charlotte Brontë, compelled all English society into a recognition, not alone of their own sterling power and genius, but also of the fact that profound and passionate emotion was still the stuff out of which great fiction could be constructed. 'Exultations, agonies, and love, and man's unconquerable mind' were taken by Charlotte Brontë as the matter out of which her art was to produce its triumphs. The novels which made her fame, 'Jane Eyre,' and 'Villette,' are positively aflame with passion and pain. They have little variety. They make hardly any pretence to accurate drawing of ordinary men and women in ordinary life, or, at all events, under ordinary conditions. The authoress had little of the gift of the mere story-teller; and her own peculiar powers were exerted sometimes with indifferent success. The familiar on whom she depended for her inspira-

tion would not always come at call. She had little genuine relish for beauty, except the beauty of a weird melancholy and of decay. But when she touched the chord of elementary human emotion with her best skill, then it was impossible for her audience not to feel that they were under the spell of a power rare indeed in our well-ordered days. The absolute sincerity of the author's expression of feeling lent it great part of its strength and charm. Nothing was ever said by her because it seemed to society the right sort of thing to say. She told a friend that she felt sure 'Jane Eyre' would have an effect on readers in general because it had so great an effect on herself. It would be possible to argue that the great strength of the books lay in their sincerity alone; that Charlotte Brontë was not so much a woman of extraordinary genius as a woman who looked her own feelings fairly in the face and painted them as she saw them. But the capacity to do this would surely be something which we could not better describe than by the word genius. Charlotte Brontë was far from being an artist of fulfilled power. She is rather to be regarded as one who gave evidence of extraordinary gifts which might with time and care, and under happier artistic auspices, have been turned to such account as would have made for her a fame with the very chiefs of her tribe. She died at an age hardly more mature than that at which Thackeray won his first distinct literary success; much earlier than the age at which some of our greatest novelists brought forth their first completed novels. But she left a very deep impression on her time, and the time that has come and is coming after her. No other hand in the age of Queen Victoria has dealt with human emotion so powerfully and so truthfully. Hers are not cheerful novels. A cold grey mournful atmosphere hangs over them. One might imagine that the shadow of an early death is forecast on them. They love to linger among the glooms of nature, to haunt her darkling wintry twilights, to study her stormy sunsets, to link man's destiny and his hopes, fears, and passions somehow with the glare and gloom of storm and darkness, and to read the symbols of his fate as the fore-doomed and passion-wasted Antony did in the cloud-masses that are 'black vesper's pageants.' The supernatural had a constant vague charm for Charlotte Brontë as the painful had. Man was to her a being torn between passionate love and the more ignoble impulses and ambitions and common-day occupations of life. Woman was a being of equal passion, still more sternly and cruelly doomed to repression and renunciation. It was a strange fact that in the midst of the splendid material successes and the quietly triumphant intellectual progress of this most prosperous and well-ordered age, when even in its poetry and its romance passion was systematically toned down and put in thrall to good taste and propriety, this young writer should have suddenly come out with

her books all thrilling with emotion, and all protesting in the strongest practical manner against the theory that the loves and hates of men and women had been tamed by the process of civilisation. Perhaps the very novelty of the apparition was in great measure a part of its success. Charlotte Brontë did not, indeed, influence the general public, or even the literary public, to anything like the same extent that Thackeray and Dickens did. She appeared and passed away almost in a moment. As Miss Martineau said of her, she stole like a shadow into literature and then became a shadow again. But she struck very deeply into the heart of the time. If her writings were only, as has been said of them, a cry of pain, yet they were such a cry as once heard lingers and echoes in the mind for ever after. Godwin declared that he would write in 'Caleb Williams' a book which would leave no man who read it the same that he was before. Something not unlike this might be said of 'Jane Eyre.' No one who read it was exactly the same that he had been before he opened its weird and wonderful pages.

The novels of Mrs. Gaskell must not be without record. 'Ruth,' and 'Cranford,' and 'Wives and Daughters'—this last left unfinished, its authoress called away by death—are pictures of quiet English life, with its homely joys and sorrows, which linger long in the mind, and have a peculiar place in our literature.

No man could well have made more of his gifts than Lord Lytton. Before the coming up of Dickens and Thackeray he stood above all living English novelists. Perhaps this is rather to the reproach of the English fiction of the day than to the renown of Lord Lytton. But even after Dickens and Thackeray and Charlotte Brontë and later and not less powerful and original writers had appeared in the same field, he still held a place of great mark in literature. That he was not a man of genius is, perhaps, conclusively proved by the fact that he was able so readily to change his style to suit the tastes of each day. He began by writing of fops and *roués* of a time now almost forgotten; then he made heroes of highwaymen and murderers; afterwards he tried the philosophic and mildly didatic style; then he turned to mysticism and spiritualism; later still he wrote of the French Second Empire. Whatever he tried to do he did well. Besides his novels he wrote plays and poems; and his plays are among the very few modern productions which manage to keep the stage. He played, too, and with much success, at being a statesman and an orator. Not Demosthenes himself had such difficulties of articulation to contend against in the beginning; and Demosthenes conquered his difficulties, while some of those in the way of Lord Lytton proved unconquerable. Yet Lord Lytton did somehow contrive to become a great speaker, and to seem occasionally like a great orator in the House of Com-

mons. He was at the very least a superb phrase-maker; and he could turn to account every scrap of knowledge in literature, art, or science which he happened to possess. His success in the House of Commons was exactly like his success in romance and the drama. He threw himself into competition with men of far higher original gifts, and he made so good a show of contesting with them that in the minds of many the victory was not clearly with his antagonists. There was always, for example, a considerable class, even among educated persons, who maintained that Lytton was in his way quite the peer of Thackeray and Dickens. His plays, or some of them, obtained a popularity only second to those of Shakespeare; and although nobody cared to read them, yet people were always found to go and look at them. When Lytton went into the House of Commons for the second time he found audiences which were occasionally tempted to regard him as the rival of Gladstone and Bright. Not a few persons saw in all this only a sort of superb *charlatanerie*; and indeed it is certain that no man ever made and kept a genuine success in so many different fields as those in which Lord Lytton tried and seemed to succeed. But he had splendid qualities; he had everything short of genius. He had indomitable patience, inexhaustible power of self-culture, and a capacity for assimilating the floating ideas of the hour which supplied the place of originality. He borrowed from the poet the knack of poetical expression, and from the dramatist the trick of construction; from the Byronic time its professed scorn for the false gods of the world; and from the more modern period of popular science and sham mysticism its extremes of materialism and magic; and of these and various other borrowings he made up an article which no one else could have constructed out of the same materials. He was not a great author; but he was a great literary man. Mr. Disraeli's novels belong in some measure to the school of 'Pelham' and 'Godolphin.' But it should be said that Mr. Disraeli's 'Vivian Grey' was published before 'Pelham' made its appearance. In all that belongs to political life Mr. Disraeli's novels are far superior to those of Lord Lytton. We have nothing in our literature to compare with some of the best of Mr. Disraeli's novels for light political satire and for easy accurate characterisation of political cliques and personages. But all else in Disraeli's novels is sham. The sentiment, the poetry, the philosophy—all these are sham. They have not half the appearance of reality about them that Lytton has contrived to give to his efforts of the same kind. In one at least of Disraeli's latest novels the political sketches and satirising became sham also.

'Alton Locke' was published nearly thirty years ago. Then Charles Kingsley became to most boys in Great Britain who read books at all a sort of living embodiment of chivalry, liberty, and a revolt against the

established order of class-oppression in so many spheres of our society. For a long time he continued to be the chosen hero of young men with the youthful spirit of revolt in them, with dreams of Republics and ideas about the equality of man. Later on he commanded other admiration for other qualities—for the championship of slave systems, of oppression, and the iron reign of mere force. But though Charles Kingsley always held a high place somewhere in popular estimation, he is not to be rated very highly as an author. He described glowing scenery admirably, and he rang the changes vigorously on his two or three ideas—the muscular Englishman, the glory of the Elizabethan discoveries, and so on. He was a scholar, and he wrote verses which sometimes one is on the point of mistaking for poetry, so much of the poet's feeling have they in them. He did a great many things very cleverly. Perhaps if he had done less he might have done better. Human capacity is limited. It is not given to mortal to be a great preacher, a great philosopher, a great scholar, a great poet, a great historian, a great novelist, and an indefatigable country parson. Charles Kingsley never seems to have made up his mind for which of these callings to go in especially, and being, with all his versatility, not at all many-sided, but strictly one-sided and almost one-idea'd, the result was, that while touching success at many points he absolutely mastered it at none. Since his novel 'Westward Ho,' he never added anything substantial to his reputation. All this acknowledged, however, it must still be owned that, failing in this, that, and the other attempt, and never achieving any real and enduring success, Charles Kingsley was an influence and a man of mark in the Victorian age.

Perhaps a word ought to be said of the rattling romances of Irish electioneering, love-making, and fighting which set people reading 'Charles O'Malley' and 'Jack Hinton,' even when 'Pickwick' was still a novelty. Charles Lever had wonderful animal spirits and a broad bright humour. He was quite genuine in his way. He afterwards changed his style completely, and with much success; and will be found in the later part of the period holding just the same relative place as in the earlier, just behind the foremost men, but in a manner so different that he might be a new writer who had never read a line of the roystering adventures of Light Dragoons which were popular when Charles Lever first gave them to the world. There was nothing great about Lever, but the literature of the Victorian period would not be quite all that we know it without him. There were many other popular novelists during the period we have passed over, some in their day more popular than either Thackeray or Charlotte Brontë. Many of us can remember without being too much ashamed of the fact that there were early days when Mr. James and his cavaliers and

his chivalric adventures gave nearly as much delight as Walter Scott could have given to the youth of a preceding generation. But Walter Scott is with us still, young and old, and poor James is gone. His once famous solitary horseman has ridden away into actual solitude, and the shades of night have gathered over his heroic form.

The founding of *Punch* drew together a host of clever young writers, some of whom made a really deep mark on the literature of their time, and the combined influence of whom in this artistic and literary undertaking was on the whole decidedly healthy. Thackeray was by far the greatest of the regular contributors to *Punch* in its earlier days. But 'The Song of the Shirt' appeared in its pages, and some of the brightest of Douglas Jerrold's writings made their appearance there. *Punch* was a thoroughly English production. It had little or nothing in common with the comic periodicals of Paris. It ignored absolutely and of set purpose the whole class of subjects which make up three-fourths of the stock in trade of a French satirist. The escapades of husbands and the infidelities of wives form the theme of by far the greater number of the humorous sketches with pen or pencil in Parisian comicalities. *Punch* kept altogether aloof from such unsavoury subjects. It had an advantage, of course, which was habitually denied to the French papers—it had unlimited freedom of political satire and caricature. Politics and the more trivial troubles and trials of social life gave subjects to *Punch*. The inequalities of class and the struggles of ambitious and vain persons to get into circles higher than their own, or at least to imitate their manners—these supplied for *Punch* the place of the class of topics on which French papers relied when they had to deal with the domestic life of the nation. *Punch* started by being somewhat fiercely Radical, but gradually toned away into a sort of intelligent and respectable Conservatism. Its artistic sketches were from first to last admirable. Some men of true genius wrought for it with the pencil as others did with the pen. Doyle, Leech, and Tenniel were men of whom any school of art might well be proud. A remarkable sobriety of style was apparent in all their humours. Of later years caricature has had absolutely no place in the illustrations to *Punch*. The satire is quiet, delicate, and no doubt superficial. It is a satire of manners, dress, and social ways altogether. There is justice in the criticism that, of late more especially, the pages of *Punch* give no idea whatever of the emotions of the English people. There is no suggestion of grievance, of bitterness, of passion or pain. It is all made up of the pleasures and annoyances of the kind of life which is enclosed in a garden party. But it must be said that *Punch* has thus always succeeded in maintaining a good, open, convenient neutral ground, where young men and maidens, girls and boys,

elderly politicians and staid matrons, law, trade, science, all sects and creeds, may safely and pleasantly mingle. It is not so, to be sure, that great satire is wrought. A Swift or a Juvenal is not thus to be brought out. But a votary of the present would have his answer simple and conclusive: we live in the age of *Punch*; we do not live in the age of Juvenal or Swift.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE LORCHA 'ARROW.'

After the supposed settlement of the Eastern Question at the Congress of Paris, a sort of languor seems to have come over Parliament and the public mind in England. Lord John Russell endeavoured unsuccessfully to have something done which should establish in England a genuine system of national education. He proposed a series of resolutions, one of which laid down the principle that after a certain appointed time, when any school district should have been declared to be deficient in adequate means for the education of the poor, the Quarter Sessions of the Peace for the county, city, or borough should have power to impose a school rate. This was a step in the direction of compulsory education. It anticipated the principle on which the first genuine measure for national instruction was founded many years after. It was of course rejected by the House of Commons when Lord John Russell proposed it. Public opinion, both in and out of Parliament, was not nearly ripe for such a principle then. All such proposals were quietly disposed of with the observation that that sort of thing might do very well for Prussians, but would never suit Englishmen. That was a time when a Prussian was regarded in England as a dull, beer-bemused, servile creature, good for nothing better than to grovel before his half-inebriated monarchs, and to get the stick from his incapable military officers. The man who suggested then that perhaps some day the Prussians might show that they knew how to fight would have been set down as on a par intellectually with the narrow-minded grumbler who did not believe in the profound sagacity of the Emperor of the French. For a country of practical men England is ruled to a marvellous extent by phrases, and the term 'un-English' was destined for a considerable time to come to settle all attempts at the introduction of any system of national education which even touched on the compulsory principle. One of the regular attempts to admit the Jews to Parliament was made and succeeded in the House of Commons, to fail,

as usual, in the House of Lords. The House of Lords itself was thrown into great perturbation for a time by the proposal of the Government to confer a peerage for life on one of the judges, Sir James Parke. Lord Lyndhurst strongly opposed the proposal, on the ground that it was the beginning of an attempt to introduce a system of life-peerages, which would destroy the ancient and hereditary character of the House of Lords, allow of its being at any time broken up and remodelled according to the discretion of the minister in power, and reduce it in fact to the level of a continental life senate. Many members of the House of Commons were likewise afraid of the innovation; it seemed to foreshadow the possible revival of an ancient principle of Crown nomination which might be applied to the representatives as well as to the hereditary chamber, seeing that at one time English sovereigns did undoubtedly assume the right of nominating members of the House of Commons. The Government, who had really no reactionary or revolutionary designs in their mind, settled the matter for the time by creating Sir James Parke Baron Wensleydale in the usual way, and the object they had in view was quietly accomplished many years later, when the appellate jurisdiction of the Lords was remodelled.

Sir George Lewis was Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was as yet not credited with anything like the political ability which he afterwards proved that he possessed. It was the fashion to regard him as a mere bookman, who had drifted somehow into Parliament, and who, in the temporary absence of available talent, had been thrust into the office lately held by Mr. Gladstone. The contrast indeed between the style of his speaking and that of Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Disraeli was enough to dishearten any political assembly. Mr. Gladstone had brought to his budget speeches an eloquence that brightened the driest details and made the wilderness of figures to blossom like the rose. Mr. Disraeli was able to make a financial statement burst into a *bouquet* of fireworks. Sir George Lewis began by being nearly inaudible, and continued to the last to be oppressed by the most ineffective and unattractive manner and delivery. But it began to be gradually found out that the monotonous, halting, feeble manner covered a very remarkable power of expression; that the speaker had great resources of argument, humour, and illustration; that every sentence contained some fresh idea or some happy expression. It was not very long before an experienced observer in Parliament declared that Sir George Lewis delivered the best speeches with the worst manner known to the existing House of Commons. After a while a reaction set in, and the capacity of Lewis ran the risk of being overrated quite as much as it had been undervalued before. In him, men said, was seen the coming

prime minister of England. Time, as it will be seen afterwards, did not allow Sir George Lewis any chance of making good this prediction. He was undoubtedly a man of rare ability and refined intellect; an example very uncommon in England of the thinker, the scholar, and the statesman in one. His speeches were an intellectual treat to all with whom matter counted for more than manner. One who had watched Parliamentary life from without and within for many years said he had never had his deliberate opinion changed by a speech in the House of Commons but twice, and each time it was an argument from Sir George Lewis that accomplished the conversion.

For the present, however, Sir George Lewis was regarded only as the sort of statesman whom it was fitting to have in office just then; the statesman of an interval in whom no one was expected to take any particular interest. The attention of the public was a good deal distracted from political affairs by the simultaneous outbreak of new forms of crime and fraud. The trial of Palmer in the Rugely poisoning case, the trial of Dove in the Leeds poisoning case, these and similar events set the popular mind into wild alarm as to the prevalence of strychnine poisoning everywhere. The failure and frauds of the Royal British Bank, the frauds of Robson and Redpath, gave for the time a sort of idea that the financial principles of the country were crumbling to pieces. The culmination of the extraordinary career of John Sadleir was fresh in public memory. This man, it will be recollected, was the organiser and guiding spirit of the Irish Brigade, the gang of adventurers whom we have already described as trading on the genuine grievances of their country to get power and money for themselves. John Sadleir overdid the thing. He embezzled, swindled, forged, and finally escaped justice by committing suicide on Hampstead Heath. So fraudful had his life been that many persons persisted in believing that his supposed suicide was but another fraud. He had got possession—such was the theory—of a dead body which bore some resemblance to his own form and features; he had palmed this off as his own corpse done to death by poison; and had himself contrived to escape with a large portion of his ill-gotten money. This extraordinary parody and perversion of the plot of Jean Paul Richter's story of 'Siebenkäs' really found many faithful believers. It is worth mentioning, not as a theory credible in itself, but as an evidence of the belief that had got abroad as to the character and the stratagems of Sadleir. The brother of Sadleir was expelled from the House of Commons; one of his accomplices, who had obtained a Government appointment and had embezzled money, contrived to make his escape to the United States; and the Irish Brigade was broken up. It is only just to say that the

best representatives of the Irish Catholics and the Irish national party, in and out of Parliament, had never from the first believed in Sadleir and his band, and had made persistent efforts to expose them.

About this same time Mr. Cyrus W. Field, an energetic American merchant, came over to this country to explain to its leading merchants and scientific men a plan he had for constructing an electric telegraph line underneath the Atlantic. Mr. Field had had this idea strongly in his mind for some years, and he made a strenuous effort to impress the English public with a conviction of its practicability. He was received by the merchants of Liverpool on November 12, 1856, in their Exchange Rooms, and he made a long statement explaining his views, which were listened to with polite curiosity. Mr. Field had, however, a much better reception on the whole than M. de Lesseps, who came to England a few months later to explain his project for constructing a ship canal across the Isthmus of Suez. The proposal was received with coldness, and more than coldness, by engineers, capitalists, and politicians. Engineers showed that the canal could not be made, or at least maintained when made; capitalists proved that it never could pay; and politicians were ready to make it plain that such a canal, if made, would be a standing menace to English interests. Lord Palmerston, a few days after, frankly admitted that the English Government were opposed to the project, because it would tend to the more easy separation of Egypt from Turkey, and set afloat speculations as to a ready access to India. M. de Lesseps himself has given an amusing account of the manner in which Lord Palmerston denounced the scheme in an interview with the projector. Luckily, neither Mr. Field nor M. de Lesseps was a person to be lightly discouraged. Great projectors are usually as full of their own ideas as great poets. M. de Lesseps had in the end perhaps more reason to be alarmed at England's sudden appreciation of his scheme than he had in the first instance to complain of the cold disapprobation with which her Government encountered it.

The political world seemed to have made up its mind for a season of quiet. Suddenly that happened which always does happen in such a condition of things—a storm broke out. To those who remember the events at that time, three words will explain the nature of the disturbance. 'The lorcha *Arrow*' will bring back the recollection of one of the most curious political convulsions known in this country during our generation. For years after the actual events connected with the lorcha *Arrow*, the very name of that ominous vessel used to send a shudder through the House of Commons. The word suggested first an impassioned controversy which had left a painful impression on the condition of political parties, and next an effort of futile persistency to open the whole controversy over

again, and force it upon the notice of legislators who wished for nothing better than to be allowed to forget it.

In the speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament, on February 3, 1857, the following passage occurred:—'Her Majesty commands us to inform you that acts of violence, insults to the British flag, and the infraction of treaty rights, committed by the local Chinese authorities at Canton, and a pertinacious refusal of redress, have rendered it necessary for her Majesty's officers in China to have recourse to measures of force to obtain satisfaction.' The acts of violence, the insults to the British flag, and the infraction of treaty rights alleged to have been committed by the Chinese authorities at Canton had for their single victim the lorcha *Arrow*. The lorcha *Arrow* was a small boat built on the European model. The word 'Lorcha' is taken from the Portuguese settlement at Macao at the mouth of Canton the river. It often occurs in treaties with the Chinese authorities. 'Every British schooner, cutter, lorcha, etc.,' are words that we constantly find in these documents. On October 8, 1856, a party of Chinese in charge of an officer boarded a boat, called the *Arrow*, in the Canton river. They took off twelve men on a charge of piracy, leaving two men in charge of the lorcha. The *Arrow* was declared by its owners to be a British vessel. Our Consul at Canton, Mr. Parkes, demanded from Yeh, the Chinese Governor of Canton, the return of the men, basing his demand upon the ninth Article of the Supplemental Treaty of 1843, entered into subsequently to the Treaty of 1842. We need not go deeper into the terms of this Treaty than to say that there could be no doubt that it did not give the Chinese authorities any right to seize Chinese offenders or supposed offenders on board an English vessel. It merely gave them a right to require the surrender of the offenders at the hands of the English. The Chinese Governor, Yeh, contended, however, that the lorcha was not an English but a Chinese vessel—a Chinese pirate, venturing occasionally for her own purposes to fly the flag of England, which she had no right whatever to hoist. Under the Treaties with China, British vessels were to be subject to consular authority only. The Treaty provided amply for the registration of vessels entitled to British protection, for the regular renewal of the registration, and for the conditions under which the registration was to be granted or renewed. The *Arrow* had somehow obtained a British registration, but it had expired about ten days before the occurrence in the Canton river, and even the British authorities who had been persuaded to grant the registration were not certain whether, with the knowledge they subsequently obtained, it could legally be renewed. We believe it may be plainly stated at once, as a matter of fact, that the *Arrow*

was not an English vessel, but only a Chinese vessel which had obtained by false pretences the temporary possession of a British flag. Mr. Consul Parkes, however, was fussy, and he demanded the instant restoration of the captured men, and he sent off to our Plenipotentiary at Hong Kong, Sir John Bowring, for authority and assistance in the business.

Sir John Bowring was a man of considerable ability. At one time he seemed to be a candidate for something like fame. He was the political pupil and the literary executor of Jeremy Bentham, and for some years was editor of the *Westminster Review*. He had a very large and varied, although not profound or scholarly, knowledge of European and Asiatic languages (there was not much scientific study of languages in his early days), he had travelled a great deal, and had sat in Parliament for some years. He understood political economy, and had a good knowledge of trade and commerce; and in those days a literary man who knew anything about trade and commerce was thought a person of almost miraculous versatility. Bowring had many friends and admirers, and he set up early for a sort of great man. He was full of self-conceit, and without any very clear idea of political principles on the large scale. Nothing in all his previous habits of life, nothing in the association and friendships by which he had long been surrounded, nothing in his studies or his writings warranted any one in expecting that when placed in a responsible position in China at a moment of great crisis he would have taken on him to act the part which aroused such a controversy. It would seem as if his eager self-conceit would not allow him to resist the temptation to display himself on the field of political action as a great English Plenipotentiary, a master-spirit of the order of Clive or Warren Hastings, bidding England be of good cheer, and compelling inferior races to grovel in the dust before her. Bowring knew China as well as it was then likely that an Englishman could know the 'huge mummy empire by the hands of custom wrapped in swathing bands.' He had been Consul for some years at Canton, and he had held the post of chief superintendent of trade there. He sent to the Chinese authorities and demanded the surrender of all the men taken from the *Arrow*. Not merely did he demand the surrender of the men, but he insisted that an apology should be offered for their arrest, and a formal pledge given by the Chinese authorities that no such act should ever be committed again. If this were not done within forty-eight hours, naval operations were to be begun against the Chinese. This sort of demand was less like that of a dignified English official, conscious of the justice of his cause and the strength of his country, than like the demeanour of Ancient Pistol formulating his terms to the fallen French-

man on the battle-field: 'I'll fer him, and firk him, and ferret him—discuss the same in French unto him.' Sir John Bowring called out to the Chinese Governor, Yeh, that he would fer him, and firk him, and ferret him, and bade the same be discussed in Chinese unto him. Yeh sent back all the men, saying in effect that he did so to avoid the ferring, and firking, and ferreting, and he even undertook to promise that for the future great care should be taken that no British ship should be visited improperly by Chinese officers. But he could not offer an apology for the particular case of the *Arrow*, for he still maintained, as was indeed the fact, that the *Arrow* was a Chinese vessel, and that the English had nothing to do with her. In truth, Sir John Bowring had himself written to Consul Parkes to say that the *Arrow* had no right to hoist the English flag, as her licence, however obtained, had expired; but he got over this difficulty by remarking that after all the Chinese did not know that fact, and that they were therefore responsible. Accordingly, Sir John Bowring carried out his threat and immediately made war on China. He did something worse than making war in the ordinary way; he had Canton bombarded by the fleet which Admiral Sir Michael Seymour commanded. From October 23 to November 13 naval and military operations were kept up continuously. A large number of forts and junks were taken and destroyed. The suburbs of Canton were battered down in order that the ships might have a clearer range to fire upon the city. Shot and shell were poured in upon Canton. Sir John Bowring thought the time appropriate for reviving certain alleged treaty rights for the admission of representatives of British authority into Canton. During the Parliamentary debates that followed, Sir John Bowring was accused by Lord Derby and Mr. Cobden of having a sort of monomania about getting into Canton. Curiously enough, in his autobiographical fragments Sir John Bowring tells us when he was a little boy he dreamed that he was sent by the King of England as ambassador to China. In his later days he appears to have been somewhat childishly anxious to realise this dream of his infancy. He showed all a child's persistent strength of will and weakness of reason in enforcing his demand, and he appears, at one period of the controversy, to have thought that it had no other end than his solemn entry into Canton. Meanwhile Commissioner Yeh retaliated by foolishly offering a reward for the head of every Englishman. Throughout the whole business Sir John Bowring contrived to keep himself almost invariably in the wrong, and even where his claim happened to be in itself good he managed to assert it in a manner at once untimely, inprudent, and indecent.

This news from China created a considerable sensation in England, although not many public men had any idea of the manner in which it

was destined to affect the House of Commons. On February 24, 1857, Lord Derby brought forward in the House of Lords a motion, comprehensively condemning the whole of the proceedings of the British authorities in China. The debate would have been memorable if only for the powerful speech in which the venerable Lord Lyndhurst supported the motion, and exposed the utter illegality of the course pursued by Sir John Bowring. Lord Lyndhurst declared that the proceedings of the British authorities could not be justified upon any principle, either of law or of reason; that the *Arrow* was simply a Chinese vessel, built in China, and owned and manned by Chinamen; and he laid it down as a 'principle which no one will successfully contest,' that you may give 'any rights and privileges to a foreigner or a foreign vessel as against yourself, but you cannot grant to any such foreigner a single right or privilege as against a foreign State.' In other words, if the British authorities chose to give a British licence to a Chinese pirate boat which would secure her some immunity against British law, that would be altogether an affair for themselves and their Government; but they could not pretend by any British register or other document to give a Chinese boat in Chinese waters a right of exemption from the laws of China. Perhaps the whole question never could have arisen if it were not for the fact on which Lord Lyndhurst commented, that 'when we are talking of treaty transactions with Eastern nations, we have a kind of loose law and loose notion of morality in regard to them.' The question as to the right conferred by the licence, such as it was, to hoist the British flag, could not have been disposed of more effectually than it was by the Chinese Governor Yeh himself, in a single sentence. 'A lorcha,' as Yeh put it, 'owned by a Chinese, purchased a British flag; did that make her a British vessel?' The Lord Chancellor was actually driven to answer Lord Lyndhurst by contending that, no matter whether the lorcha was legally or illegally flying the British flag, it was not for the Chinese to assume that she was flying it illegally, and that they had no right to board the vessel on the assumption that she was not what she pretented to be. To show the value of that argument, it is only necessary to say that if such were the recognised principle, every pirate in the Canton river would have nothing further to do than to hoist any old scrap of British bunting and sail on, defiant, under the very eyes of the Chinese authorities. The Governor of Canton would be compelled to make a formal complaint to Sir John Bowring, and trust meanwhile that a spirit of fair play would induce the pirates to wait for a formal investigation by the British authorities. Otherwise neither Chinese nor British could take any steps to capture the offenders.

The House of Lords rejected the motion of Lord Derby by a majority of 146 to 110. On February 26, Mr. Cobden brought forward a motion in the House of Commons, declaring that 'the papers which have been laid upon the table fail to establish satisfactory grounds for the violent measures resorted to at Canton in the late affair of the *Arrow*,' and demanding 'that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the state of our commercial relations with China.' This must have been a peculiarly painful task for Mr. Cobden. He was an old friend of Sir John Bowring, with whom he had always supposed himself to have many or most opinions in common. But he followed his convictions as to public duty in despite of personal friendship. It is a curious evidence of the manner in which the moral principles become distorted in a political contest, that during the subsequent elections it was actually made a matter of reproach to Mr. Cobden that while acknowledging his old friendship for Sir John Bowring he was nevertheless found ready to move a vote of censure on his public conduct. The debate was remarkable more for the singular political combination which it developed as it went on than even for its varied ability and eloquence. Men spoke and voted on the same side who had probably never been brought into such companionship before and never were afterwards. Mr. Cobden found himself supported by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli, by Mr. Roebuck and Sir E. B. Lytton, by Lord John Russell and Mr. Whiteside, by Lord Robert Cecil, afterwards the Marquis of Salisbury, Sir Frederick Thesiger, Mr. Roundell Palmer, afterwards Lord Selborne, Mr. Sydney Herbert, and Mr. Milner Gibson. The discussion lasted four nights, and it was only as it went on that men's eyes began to open to its political importance. Mr. Cobden had probably never dreamed of the amount or the nature of the support his motion was destined to receive. The Government and the Opposition alike held meetings out of doors to agree upon a general line of action in the debate and to prepare for the result. Lord Palmerston was convinced that he would come all right in the end, but he felt that he had made himself obnoxious to the advanced Liberals by his indifference, or rather hostility, to every project of reform, and he persuaded himself that the opportunity would be eagerly caught at by them to make a combination with the Tories against him. In all this he was deceiving himself, as he had done more than once before. There is not the slightest reason to believe that anything but a growing conviction of the insufficiency of the defence set up for the proceedings in Canton influenced the great majority of those who spoke and voted for Mr. Cobden's motion. The truth is, that there has seldom been so flagrant and so inexcusable an example of high-handed lawlessness in the dealings of a strong with a weak nation.

When the debate first began it is quite possible that many public men still believed some explanation or defence was coming forward which would enable them to do what the House of Commons is always unwilling not to do—to sustain the action of an English official in a foreign country. As the discussion went on it became more and more evident that there was no such defence or explanation. Men found their consciences coerced into a condemnation of Sir John Bowring's conduct. It was almost ludicrous when the miserable quibblings and evasions of the British officials came to be contrasted with the cruelly clear arguments of the Chinese. The reading of these latter documents came like a practical enforcement of Mr. Cobden's description of the Chinese Empire as a State 'which had its system of logic before the time of Aristotle, and its code of morals before that of Socrates.' The vote of censure was carried by 263 votes against 247—a majority of 16.

Mr. Disraeli, in the course of a clever and defiant speech made towards the close of the long debate, had challenged Lord Palmerston to take the opinion of the country on the policy of the government. 'I should like,' he exclaimed, 'to see the programme of the proud leaders of the Liberal party—no reform, new taxes, Canton blazing, Pekin invaded.' Lord Palmerston's answer was virtually that of Brutus: 'Why, I will see thee at Philippi then.' He announced two or three days after that the Government had resolved on a dissolution and an appeal to the country. Lord Palmerston knew his Pappenheimers. He understood his countrymen. He knew that a popular Minister makes himself more popular by appealing to the country on the ground that he has been condemned by the House of Commons for upholding the honour of England and coercing some foreign Power somewhere. His address to the electors of Tiverton differed curiously in its plan of appeal from that of Lord John Russell to the electors of the City, or that of Mr. Disraeli to those of Buckinghamshire. Lord John Russell coolly and wisely argued out the controversy between him and Lord Palmerston, and gave very satisfactory reasons to prove that there was no sufficient justification for the bombardment of Canton. Mr. Disraeli described Lord Palmerston as the Tory chief of a Radical Cabinet, and declared that, 'with no domestic policy, he is obliged to divert the attention of the people from the consideration of their own affairs to the distractions of foreign politics.' 'His external system is turbulent and aggressive, that his rule at home may be tranquil and unassailed.' In later days a charge not altogether unlike that was made against an English Prime Minister who was not Lord Palmerston. Lord Palmerston understood the temper of the country too well to trouble himself about arguments of any kind. He came to the point at once. In his address

to the electors of Tiverton he declared that 'an insolent barbarian, wielding authority at Canton, violated the British flag, broke the engagements of treaties, offered rewards for the heads of British subjects in that part of China, and planned their destruction by murder, assassination, and poison.' That of course was all-sufficient. The 'insolent barbarian' was in itself almost enough. Governor Yeh certainly was not a barbarian. His argument on the subject of International Law obtained the endorsement of Lord Lyndhurst. His way of arguing the political and commercial case compelled the admiration of Lord Derby. His letters form a curious contrast to the documents contributed to the controversy by the representatives of British authority in China. However, he became for electioneering purposes an insolent barbarian; and the story of a Chinese baker who was said to have tried to poison Sir John Bowring became transfigured into an attempt at the wholesale poisoning of Englishmen in China by the express orders of the Chinese Governor. Lord Palmerston further intimated that he and his Government had been censured by a combination of factious persons who, if they got into power and were prepared to be consistent, must apologise to the Chinese Government and offer compensation to the Chinese Commissioner. 'Will the British nation,' he asked, 'give their support to men who have thus endeavoured to make the humiliation and the degradation of their country the stepping-stone to power?'

No, to be sure; the British nation would do nothing of the kind. Lord Derby, Lord Lyndhurst, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Cobden, Mr. Disraeli, Sir E. B. Lytton, Lord Grey, Lord Robert Cecil—these were the craven Englishmen, devoid of all patriotic or manly feeling, who were trying to make the humiliation and degradation of their country a stepping-stone to power. They were likewise the friends and allies of the insolent barbarian. There were no music-halls of the modern type in those days. Had there been such, the denunciations of the insolent barbarian, and of his still baser British friends, would no doubt have been shouted forth night after night in the metropolis, to the accompaniment of rattling glasses and clattering pint-pots. Even without the alliance of the music-halls, however, Lord Palmerston swept the field of his enemies. His victory was complete. The defeat of the men of peace in especial was what Mr. Ruskin once called not a fall, but a castastrophe. Cobden, Bright, Milner Gibson, W. J. Fox, Layard, and many other leading opponents of the Chinese policy were left without seats. There was something peculiarly painful in the circumstances of Mr. Bright's defeat at Manchester. Mr. Bright was suffering from severe illness. In the opinion of many of his friends his health was thoroughly broken.

He had worked in public life with the generous disregard of his physical resources; and he was compelled to leave the country and seek rest first in Italy and afterwards in Algeria. It was not a time when even political enmity could with a good grace have ventured to visit on him the supposed offences of his party. But the 'insolent barbarian' phrase overthrew him too. He sent home from Florence a farewell address to the electors of Manchester, which was full of quiet dignity. 'I have esteemed it a high honour,' thus ran one passage of the address, 'to be one of your representatives, and have given more of mental and physical labour to your service than is just to myself. I feel it scarcely less an honour to suffer in the cause of peace, and on behalf of what I believe to be the true interests of my country, though I could have wished that the blow had come from other hands, at a time when I could have met face to face those who dealt it.'

Not long after, Mr. Cobden, one of the least sentimental and the most unaffected of men, speaking in the Manchester Free-trade Hall of the circumstances of Mr. Bright's rejection from Manchester, and the leave-taking address which so many regarded as the last public word of a great career, found himself unable to go on with that part of his speech. An emotion more honourable to the speaker and his subject than the most elaborate triumph of eloquence checked the flow of the orator's words, and for the moment made him inarticulate.

Lord Palmerston came back to power with renewed and redoubled strength. The little war with Persia, which will be mentioned afterwards, came to an end in time to give him another claim as a conqueror on the sympathies of the constituencies. His appointments of bishops had given great satisfaction to the Evangelical party, and he had become for the time quite a sort of Church hero, much to the amusement of Lord Derby, who made great sport of 'Palmerston, the true Protestant;' 'Palmerston, the only Christian Prime Minister.' In the Royal Speech at the opening of Parliament it was announced that the differences between this country and China still remained unadjusted, and that therefore 'Her Majesty had sent to China a Plenipotentiary fully entrusted to deal with all matters of difference; and that Plenipotentiary will be supported by an adequate naval and military force in the event of such assistance becoming necessary.' It would be almost superfluous to say that the assistance of the naval and military force thus suggested was found to be necessary. The Government, however, had more serious business with which to occupy themselves before they were at liberty to turn to the easy work of coercing the Chinese.

The new Parliament was engaged for some time in passing the Act

for the establishment of a Court of Divorce—that is to say, abolishing the ancient jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts respecting divorce, and setting up a regular court of law, the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Court, to deal with questions between husband and wife. The passing of the Divorce Act was strongly contested in both Houses of Parliament, and indeed was secured at last only by Lord Palmerston's intimating very significantly that he would keep the Houses sitting until the measure had been disposed of. Mr. Gladstone, in particular, offered to the bill a most strenuous opposition. He condemned it on strictly conscientious grounds. Yet it has to be said, even as a question of conscience, that there was divorce in England before the passing of the Act, the only difference being that the Act made divorce somewhat cheap and rather easy. Before it was the luxury of the rich ; the Act brought it within the reach of almost the poorest of her Majesty's subjects. We confess that we do not see how any great moral or religious principle is violated in the one case any more than in the other. The question at issue was, not whether divorce should be allowed by the law, but only whether it should be high-priced or comparatively inexpensive. It is certainly a public advantage, as it seems to us, that the change in the law has put an end to the debates that used to take place in both Houses of Parliament. When any important bill of divorce was under discussion, the members crowded the House, the case was discussed in all its details as any clause in a bill is now debated ; long speeches were made by those who thought the divorce ought to be granted and those who thought the contrary ; and the time of Parliament was occupied in the edifying discussion as to whether some unhappy woman's shame was or was not clearly established. In one famous case, where a distinguished peer, orator, and statesman sought a divorce from his wife, every point of the evidence was debated in Parliament for night after night. Members spoke in the debate who had known nothing of the case until the bill came before them. One member, perhaps, was taken with a vague sympathy with the wife ; he set about to show that the evidence against her proved nothing. Another sympathised with husbands in general, and made it his business to emphasise every point that told of guilt in the woman. More than one earnest speaker during those debates expressed an ardent hope that the time might come when Parliament should be relieved from the duty of undertaking such unsuitable and scandalous investigations. It must be owned that public decency suffers less by the regulated action of the Divorce Court than it did under this preposterous and abominable system. We cannot help adding too that the Divorce Act, judging by the public use made of it, certainly must be held to have justified itself in a merely practical sense. It seems to

have been thoroughly appreciated by a grateful public. It was not easy after a while to get judicial power enough to keep the supply of divorces up to the ever-increasing demand.

Lord Palmerston, then, appears to be furnished with an entirely new lease of power. The little Persian War has been brought to a close; the country is not disposed to listen to any complaint as to the manner in which it was undertaken. The settlement of the dispute with China promised to be an easy piece of business. The peace party were everywhere overthrown. No one could well have anticipated that within less than a year from the general election a motion made in the House of Commons by one whom it unseated was to compel the Government of Lord Palmerston suddenly to resign office.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### TRANSPORTATION.

The year 1857 would have been memorable, if for no other reason, because it saw the abolition of the system of transportation. Transportation as a means of getting rid of part of our criminal population dates from the time of Charles II., when the judges gave power for the removal of offenders to the North American Colonies. The fiction of the years coming immediately after took account of this innovation, and one of the most celebrated, if not exactly one of the finest, of Defoe's novels deals with the history of a convict thus sent out to Virginia. Afterwards the revolt of the American colonies and other cases made it necessary to send convicts farther away from civilisation. The punishment of transportation was first regularly introduced into our criminal law in 1717 by an Act of Parliament. In 1787 a cargo of criminals was shipped out to Botany Bay, on the eastern shore of New South Wales, and near Sydney, the present thriving capital of the colony. Afterwards the convicts were also sent to Van Diemen's Land or Tasmania; and to Norfolk Island, a lonely island in the Pacific, some eight hundred miles from New South Wales shore. Norfolk Island became the penal settlement, for the convicted among convicts; that is to say, criminals who, after transportation to New South Wales, committed new crimes there, might be sent by the Colonial authorities for sterner punishment to Norfolk Island.

Nothing can seem on the face of it a more satisfactory way of disposing of criminals than the system of transportation. In the first place, it got rid of them, so far as the people at home were concerned; and for a long

time that was about all that the people at home cared. Those who had committed crimes not bad enough to be disposed of by the simple and efficient operation of the gallows were got rid of in a manner almost as prompt and effective by the plan of sending them out in shiploads to America or to Australia. It looked, too, as if the system ought to be satisfactory in every way and to everybody. The convicts were provided with a new career, a new country, and a chance of reformation. They were usually after a while released from actual durance in the penal settlement, and allowed conditionally to find employment, and to make themselves, if they could, good citizens. Their labour, it was thought, would be of great service to the colonists. The Act of 1717 recited that 'in many of his Majesty's colonies and plantations in America there was a great want of servants who, by their labour and industry, might be the means of improving and making the said colonies and plantations more useful to this nation.' At that time statesmen only thought of the utility of the colonies to this nation. Philanthropy might therefore for a while beguile itself with the belief that the transportation system was a benefit to the transported as well as to those among whom they were sent. But the colonists very soon began to complain. The convicts who had spent their period of probation in hulks or prisons generally left those homes of horror with natures so brutalised as to make their intrusion into any community of decent persons an insufferable nuisance. Pent up in penal settlements by themselves, the convicts turned into demons; drafted into an inhabited colony, they were too numerous to be wholly absorbed by the population, and they carried their contagion along with them. New South Wales began to protest against their presence. Lord John Russell, when Secretary for the Colonies in 1840, ordered that no more of the criminal refuse should be carted out to that region. Then Tasmania had them all to herself for a while. Lord Stanley, when he came to be at the head of the Colonial Office, made an order that the free settlers of Tasmania were not to obtain convict labour at any lower rates than the ordinary market price; and Tasmania had only put up with the presence of the convicts at all for the sake of getting their labour cheap. Tasmania, therefore, began to protest against being made the refuse ground for our scoundrelism. Mr. Gladstone, while Colonial Secretary, suspended the whole system for a while, but it was renewed soon after. Sir George Grey endeavoured to make the Cape of Good Hope a receptacle for a number of picked convicts; but in 1849 the inhabitants of Cape Colony absolutely refused to allow a shipload of criminals to be discharged upon their shores, and it was manifestly impossible to compel them to receive such disagreeable guests. By this time public opinion in England was

ready to sympathise to the full with any colony which stood out against the degrading system. For a long time there had been growing up a conviction that the transportation system carried intolerable evils with it. Romilly and Bentham had condemned it long before. In 1837 a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to consider and report on the system. The Committee included Lord John Russell, Sir Robert Peel, Charles Buller, Sir W. Molesworth, and Lord Howick, afterwards Earl Grey. The evidence they collected settled the question in the minds of all thinking men. The Rev. Walter Clay, son of the famous prison chaplain, Rev. John Clay, says in his memoirs of his father, that probably no volume was ever published in England of which the contents were so loathsome as those of the appendix to the Committee's report. There is not much exaggeration in this. The reader must be left to imagine for himself some of the horrors which would be disclosed by a minute account of what happened in a penal den like Norfolk Island, where a number of utterly brutalised men were left to herd together without anything like beneficent control, without homes, and without the society of women. In Norfolk Island the convicts worked in chains. They were roused at daylight in the morning, and turned out to labour in their irons, and huddled back in their dens at night. In some rare cases convicts were sent directly from England to Norfolk Island; but as a rule the island was kept as a place of punishment for criminals who, already convicted in the mother country, were found guilty of new crimes during their residence in New South Wales.

The condition of things in New South Wales was such as civilisation has not often seen. In Sydney especially it was extraordinary. When the convicts were sent out to the colony they received each in turn, after a certain period of penal probation, a conditional freedom; in other words, a ticket of leave. They were allowed to work for the colonists, and to support themselves. Anyone who wanted labourers or artizans or servants could apply to the authorities and have convicts assigned to him for the purpose. Female convicts as well as male were thus employed. There was, therefore, a large number of convicts, men and women, moving about freely in the active life of Sydney, doing business, working in trades, performing domestic service; to all appearance occupying the place that artizans and labourers and servants occupy among ourselves. But there was a profound difference. The convict labourers and servants were in reality little better than slaves. They were assigned to masters and mistresses, and they had to work. Stern laws were enacted, and were no doubt required, to keep those terrible subordinates in order. The lash was employed to discipline the men; the women were practically unman-

ageable. The magistrates had the power, on the complaint of any master or mistress, to order a man to be flogged with as many as fifty lashes. Some of the punishment lists remind a reader of the days of slavery in the United States. On every page we come on entries of the flogging of men for disobeying the orders of a master or mistress; for threatening a fellow-servant, for refusing to rub down the horse or clean the carriage, or some such breach of discipline. A master who was also a magistrate, was not allowed to adjudicate in his own case; but practically it would seem that masters and mistresses could have their convict servants flogged whenever they thought fit. At that time a great many of the native population, 'the Blacks' as they were called, used to stream into the town of Sydney, as the Indians now come into Salt Lake City or some other western town of America. In some of the outlying houses they would lounge into the kitchens, as beggars used to do in Ireland in old days, looking out for any scraps that might be given to them. It was a common sight then to see half a dozen of the native women, absolutely naked, hanging round the doors of houses where they expected anything. Between the native women and the convicts at large an almost indiscriminate intercourse set in. The 'Black' men would bring their wives into the town and offer them for a drop of rum or a morsel of tobacco. In this extraordinary society there were these three strands of humanity curiously intertwined. There was the civilised Englishman with his money, his culture, his domestic habits; there was the outcast of English civilisation, the gaol-bird fresh from the prison and the hulks; and there was the aboriginal naked savage. In the drawing-room sat the wife and daughters of the magistrate; in the stable was the convict, whose crimes had perhaps been successive burglaries crowned with attempted murder; in the kitchen were women servants taken from the convict dépot and known to be prostitutes; and hanging round the door were the savages, men and women. All the evidence seems to agree that with hardly any exceptions the women convicts were literally prostitutes. There were some exceptions, which it is well to notice. Witnesses who were questioned on the subject gave it as the result of their experience, that women convicted of any offence whatever in this country and sent out to New South Wales invariably took to profligacy, unless they were Irishwomen. That is to say, it did not follow that an Irish convict woman must necessarily be a profligate woman; it did follow as a matter of fact in the case of other women. Some of the convicts married women of bad character and lived on their immoral earnings, and made no secret of the fact. Many of these husbands boasted that they made their wives keep them in what they considered luxuries by the wages of their sin. Tea and sugar were

great luxuries to them at that time, and it was a common saying among men of this class that their wives must take care to have the tea and sugar bag filled every day. The convicts soon inoculated the natives with the vilest vices and the foulest diseases of civilisation. Many an English lady found that her woman servants went off in the night somewhere and came back in the morning, and they knew perfectly well that the women had been off on some wild freak of profligacy ; but it was of no use to complain. In the midst of all this it would appear that a few of the convicts did behave well; that they kept to work with iron industry, and rose in the world, and were respected. In some cases the wives of convicts went out to New South Wales and started farms or shops, and had their husbands assigned to them as servants, and got on tolerably well. But in general the convicts led a life of utter profligacy, and they corrupted all that came within their reach. One convict said to a judge: 'Let a man be what he will, when he comes out here he is soon as bad as the rest; a man's heart is taken from him, and there is given to him the heart of a beast.' Perpetual profligacy, incessant flogging,—this was the combination of the convict's life. Many of the convicts liked the life on the whole, and wrote to friends at home urging them to commit some offence, get transported, and come out to New South Wales. An idle ruffian had often a fine time of it there. This of course does not apply to Norfolk Island. No wretch could be so degraded or so unhappy anywhere else as to find relief in that hideous lair of suffering and abomination.

Such was the condition of things described to the Committee of the House of Commons in 1837. It is right and even necessary to say that we have passed over almost without allusion some of the most hideous of the revelations. We have kept ourselves to abominations which at all events bear to be spoken of. From the publication of the evidence taken before the Committee anyone might have seen that the transportation system was doomed. It was clear that if any colony made up its mind to declare that it would not endure the thing any longer, no English Minister could venture to say that he would force it on the colonists. The doomed and odious system, however, continued for a long time to be put in operation as far as possible. It was most tempting both as to theory and as to practice. It was an excellent thing for the people at home to get rid of so much of their ruffianism; and it was easy to persuade ourselves that the system gave the convicts a chance of reform, and ought to be acceptable to the colonists.

The colonists, however, made up their minds at last in most places, and would not have any more of our convicts. Only in Western Australia were the people willing to receive them on any conditions, and

Western Australia had but scanty natural resources and could in any case harbour very few of our outcasts. The discovery of gold in Australia settled the question of those colonies being troubled any more with our transportation system; for the greatest enthusiast for transportation would hardly propose to send out gangs of criminals to a region glowing with the temptations of gold. There were some thoughts of establishing a convict settlement on the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria on the north side of the great Australian Island. Some such scheme was talked of at various intervals. It always, however, broke down on a little examination. One difficulty alone was enough to dispose of it effectually. It was impossible, after the revelations of the Committee of the House of Commons, to have a convict settlement of men alone; and if it was proposed to found a colony, where were the women to come from? Were respectable English and Irish girls to be enticed to go out and become the wives of convicts? What statesman would make such a proposal? The wildest projects were suggested. Let the convicts marry the savage women, one ingenious person suggested. Unfortunately in the places thought most suitable for a settlement there happened to be no savage women. Let the convict men be married to convict women, said another philosopher. But even if any Colonial Minister could have been found hardy enough to approach Parliament with a scheme for the foundation of a colony on the basis of common crime, it had to be said that there were not nearly enough of convict women to supply brides for even a tolerable proportion of the convict men. Another suggestion it is only necessary to mention for the purpose of showing to what lengths the votaries of an idea will go in their effort to make it fit in with the actual conditions of things. There were persons who thought it would not be a bad plan to get rid of two nuisances at once, our convicts and a portion of what is euphuistically termed our 'social evil,' by founding a penal settlement on some lonely shore, and sending out cargoes of the abandoned women of our large towns to be the wives of the present and the mothers of the future colonists. When it came to propositions of this kind it was clear that there was an end to any serious discussion as to the possibility of founding a convict settlement. As late as 1856 Committees of both Houses of Parliament declared themselves greatly in favour of the transportation system—that is, of some transportation system, of an ideal transportation system; but also recorded their conviction that it would be impossible to carry on the known system any longer.

The question then arose what was England to do with the criminals whom up to that time she had been able to shovel out of her way. All the receptacles were closed but Western Australia, and that counted for

almost nothing. Some prisoners were then, and since, sent out for a part of their term to Gibraltar and Bermuda; but they were always brought back to this country to be discharged, so that they may be considered as forming a part of the ordinary class of criminals kept in detention here. The transportation system was found to carry evils in its train which did not directly belong to its own organisation. It had been for a long time the practice of England and Scotland to send out to a colony only those who were transported for ten years and upwards, and to retain those condemned for shorter periods in the hulks and other convict prisons. In these hideous hulks the convicts were huddled together very much as in Norfolk Island, with scarcely any superintendence or discipline, and the result was that they became what were called with hardly any exaggeration 'floating hells.' It was quite clear that the whole system of our dealings with our convicts must be revised and reorganised. In 1853 the Government took a step which has been well described as an avowal that we must take the complete charge of our criminals upon ourselves. A bill was brought in by the Ministry to substitute penal servitude for transportation, unless in cases where the sentence was for fourteen years and upwards. The bill reduced the scale of punishment; that is to say, made a shorter period of penal servitude supply the place of a longer term of transportation. Lord Palmerston was Home Secretary at this time. It was during that curious episode in his career described in a former volume when he adopted, if such an expression may be used, the business of Home Secretary in order, as he put it, to learn how to deal with the concerns of the country internally, and to be brought in contact with his fellow-countrymen. He threw all his characteristic energy into the work of carrying through the measure for the establishment of a new system of secondary punishments. It was during the passing of the bill through the House of Lords that Lord Grey suggested the introduction of a modification of the ticket-of-leave system which was in practice in the colonies. The principle of the ticket-of-leave was that the convict should not be kept in custody during the whole period of his sentence, but that he should be allowed to pass through a period of conditional liberty before he obtained his full and unrestricted freedom. Lord Grey also urged that the sentences to penal servitude should correspond in length with sentences for transportation. The Government would not accept this latter suggestion, but they adopted the principle of the ticket-of-leave. The bill was introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Cranworth, the Lord Chancellor. When it came down to the House of Commons there was some objection made to the ticket-of-leave clauses, but the Government carried them through. The effect of the measure was to substitute penal

servitude for transportation, in all cases except those where the sentence of transportation was for fourteen years and upwards. Now there can be no doubt that the principle of the ticket-of-leave is excellent. But it proved on its first trial in this country the most utter delusion. It got no fair chance at all. It was understood by the whole English public that the object of the ticket-of-leave was to enable the authorities to give a conditional discharge from custody to a man who had in some way proved his fitness for such a relaxation of punishment, and that the eyes of the police would be on him even during the period of his conditional release. This was in fact the construction put on the Act in Ireland, where accordingly the ticket-of-leave system was worked with the most complete success. Under the management of Sir Walter Crofton, chairman of the Board of Prison Directors, the principle was applied exactly as anyone might have supposed it would be applied everywhere, and as indeed the very conditions endorsed on the ticket-of-leave distinctly suggested. The convicts in Ireland were kept away from the general community in a little penal settlement near Dublin; they were put at first to hard, monotonous, and weary labour; they were then encouraged to believe that with energy and good conduct they could gradually obtain relaxation of punishment, and even some small rewards; they were subjected to a process of really reforming discipline; they got their conditional freedom as soon as they had satisfactorily proved that they deserved and were fit for it; but even then they had to report themselves periodically to the police, and they knew that if they were seen to be relapsing into old habits and old companionships they were certain to be sent back to the penal settlement to begin the hard work over again. The result was substantial and lasting reform. It was easy for the men who were let out conditionally to obtain employment. A man who had Sir Walter Crofton's ticket-of-leave was known by that very fact to have given earnest of good purpose and steady character. The system in Ireland was therefore all that its authors could have wished it to be. But for some inscrutable reason the Act was interpreted in this country as simply giving every convict a right, after a certain period of detention, to claim a ticket-of-leave provided he had not grossly violated any of the regulations of the prison, or misconducted himself in some outrageous manner. In 1856 Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, told the House of Commons that there never was a more fallacious idea than the supposition that a ticket-of-leave was a certificate of good character, and that a man only obtained such a ticket if he could prove that he had reformed. A ticket-of-leave, he went on to explain, was indeed withheld in the case of very bad conduct; but in any ordinary case the convicts, 'unless they have transgressed the prison rules, and acted in such

a manner as to incur an unfavourable report from the prison authorities, are, after a stated period of imprisonment, entitled as a matter of course to a ticket-of-leave.'

It would be superfluous to examine the working of such a system as that which Sir George Grey described. A number of scoundrels whom the judges had sentenced to be kept in durance for so many years were without any conceivable reason turned loose upon society long before the expiration of their sentence. They were in England literally turned loose upon society, for it was held by the authorities here that it might possibly interfere with the chance of a gaol-bird's getting employment, if he were seen to be watched by the police. The police therefore were considerately ordered to refrain from looking after them. 'I knew you once,' says the hero of a poem by Mr. Browning, 'but in Paradise, should we meet, I will pass nor turn my face.' The police were ordered to act thus discreetly if they saw Bill Sykes asking for employment in some wealthy and quiet household. They certainly knew him once, but now they were to pass nor turn their face. Nothing, surely, that we know of the internal arrangements of Timbuctoo, to adopt the words of Sydney Smith, warrants us in supposing that such a system would have been endured there for a year. Fifty per cent. of the ruffians released on ticket-of-leave were afterwards brought up for new crimes, and convicted over again. Of those who although not actually convicted were believed to have relapsed into their old habits, from sixty to seventy per cent. relapsed within the first year of their liberation. Baron Bramwell stated from the bench that he had had instances of criminals coming before him who had three sentences overlapping each other. The convict was set free on ticket-of-leave, convicted of some new crime, and re-committed to prison; released again on ticket-of-leave, and convicted once again, before the period of his original sentence had expired. An alarm sprang up in England; and like all alarms it was supported both by exaggeration and misconception. The system pursued with the convicts was bad enough; but the popular impression ascribed to the ticket-of-leave men every crime committed by anyone who had been previously convicted and imprisoned. A man who had worked out the whole of his sentence, and who therefore had to be discharged, committed some crime immediately after. Excited public opinion described it as a crime committed by a ticket-of-leave man. Two Committees sat, as has already been said, in 1856. The result of the public alarm and the Parliamentary reconsideration of the whole subject, was the bill brought in by Sir George Grey in 1857. This measure extended the provisions of the Act of 1853 by substituting in all cases a sentence of penal servitude for one of transportation. It extended the

limits of the penal servitude sentences by making them correspond with the terms of transportation to which men had previously been sentenced. It gave power also to pass sentences of penal servitude for shorter periods than was allowed by former legislation, allowing penal servitude for as short a period as three years. It attached to all sentences of penal servitude the liability to be removed from this country to places beyond seas fitted for their reception; and it restricted the range of the remission of sentences. The Act, it will be seen, abolished the old-fashioned transportation system altogether, but it left the power to the authorities to have penal servitude carried out in any of the colonies where it might be thought expedient. The Government had still some idea of utilising Western Australia for some of our offenders. But nothing came of this plan, or of the clause in the new Act which was passed to favour it; and as a matter of fact transportation was abolished. How the amended legislation worked in other respects we shall have an opportunity of examining hereafter.

Transportation was not the only familiar institution which came to an end in this year. The Gretna Green marriages became illegal in 1857, their doom having been fixed for that time by an Act passed in the previous session. Thenceforward such marriages were unlawful, unless one of the parties had lived at least twenty-one days previously in Scotland. The hurried flight to the border, the post-chaise and the panting steeds, the excited lovers, the pursuing father, passed away into tradition. Lydia Languish had to reconcile herself to the licence and the blessing, and even the writers of fiction might have given up without a sigh an incident which had grown wearisome in romance long before it ceased to be interesting in reality.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE SEPOY.

On the 23rd of June, 1857, the hundredth anniversary of the battle of Plassey was celebrated in London. One object of the celebration was to obtain the means of raising a monument to Clive in his native county. At such a meeting it was but natural that a good deal should be said about the existing condition of India, and the prospects of that great empire which the genius and the daring of Clive had gone so far to secure for the English Crown. It does not appear, however, as if any alarm was expressed with regard to the state of things in Bengal, or as if any of the noblemen and gentlemen present believed that at that very moment India

was passing through a crisis more serious than Clive himself had had to encounter. Indeed, a month or so before a Bombay journal had congratulated itself on the fact that India was quiet 'throughout.' Yet at the hour when the Plassey celebration was going on the great Indian Mutiny was already six weeks old, had already assumed full and distinctive proportions, was already known in India to be a convulsion destined to shake to its foundations the whole fabric of British rule in Hindostan. A few evenings after the celebration there was some cursory and casual discussion in Parliament about the doubtful news that had begun to arrive from India; but as yet no Englishman at home took serious thought of the matter. The news came at last with a rush.

Never in our time, never probably at any time, came such news upon England as the first full story of the outbreak in India. It came with terrible, not unnatural, exaggeration. England was horror-stricken by the stories of wholesale massacres of English women and children; of the most abominable tortures, the most degrading outrages inflicted upon English matrons and maidens. The newspapers ran over with the most horrifying and the most circumstantial accounts of how English ladies of the highest refinement were dragged naked through the streets of Delhi, and were paraded in their nakedness before the eyes of the aged King of Delhi, in order that his hatred might be feasted with the sight of the shame and agony of the captives. Descriptions were given, to which it is unnecessary to make any special allusions now, of the vile mutilations and tortures inflicted on Englishwomen to glut the vengeance of the tyrant. The pen of another Procopius could alone have done full justice to the narratives which were poured in day after day upon the shuddering ears of Englishmen, until all thought even of the safety of the Indian Empire was swallowed up in a wild longing for revenge on the whole seed, breed, and race of the mutinous people who had tortured and outraged our countrywomen. It was not till the danger was all over, and British arms had reconquered Northern India, that England learned the truth with regard to these alleged outrages and tortures. Let us dispose of this most painful part of the terrible story at the very beginning, and once for all. During the Indian Mutiny the blood of innocent women and children was cruelly and lavishly spilt; on one memorable occasion with a bloodthirstiness that might have belonged to the most savage times of mediæval warfare. But there were no outrages, in the common acceptation, upon women. No Englishwomen were stripped or dishonoured, or purposely mutilated. As to this fact all historians of the mutiny are agreed.

But if the first stories of the outbreak that reached England dealt in exaggerations of this kind, they do not seem to have exaggerated, they do

not seem to have even adequately appreciated, the nature of the crisis with which England was suddenly called upon to deal. The fact was, that throughout the greater part of the north and north-west of the great Indian peninsula there was a rebellion of the native races against English power. It was not alone the Sepoys who rose in revolt. It was not by any means a merely military mutiny. It was a combination, whether the growth of deliberate design and long preparation, or the sudden birth of chance and unexpected opportunity—a combination of military grievance, national hatred and religious fanaticism, against the English occupiers of India. The native princes and the native soldiers were in it. The Mahomedan and the Hindoo forgot their own religious antipathies to join against the Christian. Hatred and panic were the stimulants of that great rebellious movement. The quarrel about the greased cartridges was but the chance spark flung in among all the combustible material. If that spark had not lighted it, some other would have done the work. In fact, there are thoughtful and well-informed historians who believe that the incident of the greased cartridges was a fortunate one for our people; that coming as it did it precipitated unexpectedly a great convulsion which, occurring later, and as the result of more gradual operations, might have been far more dangerous to the perpetuity of our rule.

Let us first see what were the actual facts of the outbreak. When the improved (Enfield) rifle was introduced into the Indian army, the idea got abroad that the cartridges were made up in paper greased with a mixture of cow's fat and hog's lard. It appears that the paper was actually greased, but not with any such material as that which religious alarm suggested to the native troops. Now a mixture of cow's fat and hog's lard would have been, above all other things, unsuitable for use in cartridges to be distributed among our Sepoys; for the Hindoo regards the cow with religious veneration, and the Mahomedan looks upon the hog with utter loathing. In the mind of the former something sacred to him was profaned; in that of the latter something unclean and abominable was forced upon his daily use. It was in 1856 that the new rifles were sent out from England, and the murmur against their use began at once. Various efforts were made to allay the panic among the native troops. The use of the cartridges complained of was discontinued by orders issued in January, 1857. The Governor-General sent out a proclamation in the following May, assuring the army of Bengal that the tales told to them of offence to their religion or injury to their caste being meditated by the Government of India, were all malicious inventions and falsehoods. Still the idea was strong among the troops that some design against their religion was meditated. A mutinous spirit began to spread itself abroad. In March

some of the native regiments had to be disbanded. In April some executions of Sepoys took place for gross and open mutiny. In the same month several of the Bengal native cavalry in Meerut refused to use the cartridges served out to them, although they had been authoritatively assured that the paper in which the cartridges were wrapped had never been touched by any offensive material. On May 9 these men were sent to the gaol. They had been tried by court-martial, and were sentenced, eighty of them, to imprisonment and hard labour for ten years, the remaining five to a similar punishment for six years. They had chains put on them in the presence of their comrades, who no doubt regarded them as martyrs to their religious faith, and they were thus publicly marched off to the common gaol. The guard placed over the gaol actually consisted of Sepoys.

The following day, Sunday, May 10, was memorable. The native troops in Meerut broke into open mutiny. The *summa dies*, the *ineluctabile tempus* had come. They fired upon their officers, killed a colonel and others, broke into the gaol, released their comrades, and massacred several of the European inhabitants. The European troops rallied and drove them from their cantonments or barracks. Then came the momentous event, the turning point of the mutiny; the act that marked out its character, and made it what it afterwards became. Meerut is an important military station between the Ganges and the Jumna, thirty-eight miles north-east from Delhi. In the vast palace of Delhi, almost a city in itself, a reeking Alsatia of lawless and privileged vice and crime, lived the aged King of Delhi, as he was called; the disestablished, but not wholy disendowed, sovereign, the descendant of the great Timour, the last representative of the Grand Mogul. The mutineers fled along the road to Delhi; and some evil fate directed that they were not to be pursued or stopped on their way. Unchecked, unpursued, they burst into Delhi, and swarmed into the precincts of the palace of the king. They claimed his protection; they insisted upon his accepting their cause and themselves. They proclaimed him Emperor of India, and planted the standard of rebellion against English rule on the battlements of his palace. They had found in one moment a leader, a flag, and a cause, and the mutiny was transfigured into a revolutionary war. The Sepoy troops, in the city and the cantonments on the Delhi ridge, two miles off, and overlooking the city, at once began to cast in their lot with the mutineers. The poor old puppet whom they set up as their emperor was some eighty years of age; a feeble creature, believed to have a mild taste for poetry and weak debauchery. He had long been merely a pensioner of the East India Company. During the early intrigues and struggles between the English and French in India

the Company had taken the sovereigns of Delhi under their protection, nominally to save them from the aggressiveness of the rival power; and, as might be expected, the Delhi monarchs soon became mere pensionaries of the British authorities. It had even been determined that after the old king's death a different arrangement should be made; that the title of king would not be allowed any longer, and that the privileges of the palace, the occupants of which were thus far allowed to be a law to themselves, should be restricted or abolished. A British Commissioner directed affairs in the city, and British troops were quartered on the Delhi ridge outside. Still the king was living, and was called a king. He was the representative of the great dynasty whose name and effigies had been borne by all the coin of India until within some twenty years before. He stood for legitimacy and divine right; and he supplied all the various factions and sects of which the mutiny was composed, or to be composed, with a visible and an acceptable head. If the mutineers flying from Meerut had been promptly pursued and dispersed, or captured, before they reached Delhi, the tale we have to tell might have been much shorter and very different. But when they reached, unchecked, the Jumna glittering in the morning light, when they swarmed across the bridge of boats that spanned it, and when at length they clamoured under the windows of the palace that they had come to restore the rule of the Delhi dynasty, they had all unconsciously seized one of the great critical moments of history, and converted a military mutiny into a national and religious war.

This is the manner in which the Indian Rebellion began and assumed its distinct character. But this dry statement of facts would go a very short way towards explaining how the mutiny of a few regiments came to assume the aspect of a rebellion. Mutinies were not novelties in India. There had been some very serious outbreaks before the time of the greased cartridges. The European officers of the Company had themselves mutinied in Bengal nearly a century before; and that time the Sepoys stood firm by the Company whose salt they had eaten. There was a more general and serious mutiny at Vellore, near Madras, in 1806; and the sons of the famous Tippoo Sahib took part with it, and endeavoured to make it the means of regaining the forfeited power of their house. It had to be dealt with as if it were a war, and Vellore had to be recaptured. In 1849 a Bengal regiment seized a fortress near Lahore. Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Scinde, once protested that thirty regiments of the Bengal army were ripe for revolt. Napier, however, seems to have thought only of military mutiny, and not of religious and political rebellion. At Meerut itself, the very cradle of the outbreak, a pamphlet was published in 1851 by Colonel Hodgson, to argue that the admission

of the priestly caste too freely into the Bengal army would be the means of fomenting sedition among the native troops. But there was a combination of circumstances at work to bring about such a revolt as Napier never dreamed of; a revolt as different from the outbreak he contemplated as the French Revolution differed from the Mutiny of the Nore. These causes affected variously but at once the army, the princes, and the populations of India.

'The causes and motives for sedition,' says Bacon—and the words have been cited with much appropriateness and effect by Sir J. W. Kaye in his 'History of the Sepoy War'—'are innovations in religion, taxes, alteration of laws and customs, breaking of privileges, general oppression, advancement of unworthy persons, strangers, deaths, disbanded soldiers, factions grown desperate, and whatsoever in offending people joineth and knitteth them in a common cause.' Not all these various impulses to rebellion were stirring perhaps in India, but assuredly many, possibly the majority, of them were at work. As is usual in such cases too, it happened that many changes made, nay, many privileges disinterestedly conferred by the ruling power in India for the benefit and pleasure of the native levies, turned into other causes and stimulants of sedition and rebellion. Let us speak first of the army. The Bengal army was very different in its constitution and conditions from that of Bombay or Madras, the other great divisions of Indian government at that time. In the Bengal army, the Hindoo Sepoys were far more numerous than the Mahomedans, and were chiefly Brahmins of high caste; while in Madras and Bombay the army was made up, as the Bengal regiments are now, of men of all sects and races without discrimination. Until the very year before the Mutiny the Bengal soldier was only enlisted for service in India, and was exempted from any liability to be sent across the seas; across the black water which the Sepoy dreaded and hated to have to cross. No such exemption was allowed to the soldiers of Bombay or Madras; and in July 1856, an order was issued by the military authorities to the effect that future enlistments in Bengal should be for service anywhere without limitation. Thus the Bengal Sepoy had not only been put in the position of a privileged and pampered favourite, but he had been subjected to the indignity and disappointment of seeing his privileges taken away from him. He was indeed an excellent soldier, and was naturally made a favourite by many of his commanders. But he was very proud, and was rigidly tenacious of what he considered his rights. He lived apart with his numerous and almost limitless family, representing all grades of relationship; he cooked his food apart and ate it apart; he acknowledged one set of governing principles while he was on parade, and

had a totally different code of customs and laws and morals to regulate his private life. The tide of blood relationship was very strong with the Sepoy. The elder Sepoy always took good care to keep his regiment well supplied with recruits from among his own family. As the Highland sergeant in the British army endeavours to have as many as possible of his kith and clan in the regiment with himself; as the Irishman in the New York police force is anxious to get as many of his friends and fellow countrymen as may be into the same ranks, so the Sepoy did his best to surround himself with men of his blood and of his ways. There was therefore the spirit of a clan and of a sect pervading the Sepoy regiments; a strong current flowing beneath the stream of superficial military discipline and *esprit de corps*. The Sepoy had many privileges denied to his fellow-religionists who were not in the military ranks. Let it be added that he was very often deeply in debt; that his pay was frequently mortgaged to usurers who hung on him as the crimps do upon a sailor in one of our seaport towns; and that therefore he had something of Catiline's reason for desiring a general upset and a clearing off of old responsibilities.

But we must above all other things take into account, when considering the position of the Hindoo Sepoy, the influence of the tremendous institution of caste. An Englishman or European of any country will have to call his imaginative faculties somewhat vigorously to his aid in order to get even an idea of the power of this monstrous superstition. The man who by the merest accident, by the slightest contact with anything that defiled, had lost caste, was excommunicated from among the living, and was held to be for evermore accurst of God. His dearest friend, his nearest relation, shrank back from him in alarm and abhorrence. When Helen Macgregor, in Scott's romance, would express her sense of the degradation that had been put upon her, she declares that her mother's bones would shrink away from her in the grave, if her corpse were to be laid beside them. The Sepoy fully believed that his mothers' bones ought to shrink away from contact with the polluted body of the son who had lost caste. Now, it had become from various causes a strong suspicion in the mind of the Sepoy that there was a deliberate purpose in the minds of the English rulers of the country to defile the Hindoos, and to bring them all to the dead level of one caste or no caste. The suspicion in part arose out of the fact that this institution of caste, penetrating as it did so subtly and so universally into all the business of life, could not but come into frequent collision with any system of European military and civil discipline, however carefully and considerately managed. No doubt there was in many instances a lack of consideration shown for the Hindoo's peculiar and very perplexing tenets. The Englishman is not usually a very imagi-

native personage; nor is he rich in those sympathetic instincts which might enable a ruler to enter into and make allowance for the influence of sentiments and usages widely different from his own. To many a man fresh from the ways of England, the Hindoo doctrines and practices appeared so ineffably absurd that he could not believe any human beings were serious in their devotion to them, and he took no pains to conceal his opinion as to the absurdity of the creed, and the hypocrisy of those who professed it. Some of the elder officers and civilians were imbued very strongly with a conviction that the work of open, and what we may call aggressive, proselytism, was part of the duty of a Christian; and in the best faith and with the purest intentions they thus strengthened the growing suspicion that the mind of the authorities was set on the defilement of the Hindoos. Nor was it among the Hindoos alone that the alarm began to be spread abroad. It was the conviction of the Mahomedans that their faith and their rites were to be tampered with as well. It was whispered among them everywhere that the peculiar baptismal custom of the Mahomedans was to be suppressed by law, and that Mahomedan women were to be compelled to go unveiled in public. The slightest alterations in any system gave fresh confirmation to the suspicions that were afloat among the Hindoos and Mussulmans. When a change was made in the arrangements of the prisons, and the native prisoners were no longer allowed to cook for themselves, a murmur went abroad that this was the first overt act in the conspiracy to destroy the caste, and with it the bodies and souls of the Hindoos. Another change must be noticed too. At one time it was intended that the native troops should be commanded for the most part by native officers. The men would, therefore, have had something like sufficient security that their religious scruples were regarded and respected. But by degrees the clever, pushing, and capable Briton began to monopolise the officers' posts everywhere. The natives were shouldered out of the high positions, until at length it became practically an army of native rank and file commanded by Englishmen. If we remember that a Hindoo sergeant of lower caste would, when off parade, often abase himself with his forehead in the dust before a Sepoy private who belonged to the Brahmin order, we shall have some idea of the perpetual collision between military discipline and religious principle which affected the Hindoo members of an army almost exclusively commanded by Europeans and Christians.

There was, however, yet another influence, and one of tremendous importance in determining the set of that otherwise vague current of feeling which threatened to disturb the tranquil permanence of English rule in India. We have spoken of the army and of its religious scruples;

we must now speak of the territorial and political influences which affected the princes and the populations of India. There had been just before the outbreak of the Mutiny a wholesale removal of the landmarks, a striking application of a bold and thorough policy of annexation; a gigantic system of reorganisation applied to the territorial arrangements of the north and north-west of the great Indian peninsula. A master-spirit had been at work at the reconstruction of India; and if you cannot make revolutions with rosewater, neither can you make them without reaction.

Lord Dalhousie had not long left India on the appointment of Lord Canning to the Governor-Generalship when the Mutiny broke out. Lord Dalhousie was a man of commanding energy, of indomitable courage, with the intellect of a ruler of men, and the spirit of a conqueror. The statesmen of India perform their parts upon a vast stage, and yet they are to the world in general somewhat like the actors in a provincial theatre. They do not get the fame of their work and their merits. Men have arisen in India whose deeds, if done in Europe, would have ranked them at least with the Richelieus and Bismarcks of history, if not actually with the Cæsars and Charlemagnes; and who are yet condemned to what may almost be called a merely local renown; a record on the roll of great officials. Lord Dalhousie was undoubtedly a great man. He had had some Parliamentary experience in England and in both Houses; and he had been Vice-President and subsequently President of the Board of Trade under Sir Robert Peel. He had taken great interest in the framing of regulations for the railway legislation of the mania season of 1844 and 1845. Towards the close of 1847 Lord Hardinge was recalled from India, and Lord Dalhousie was sent out in his place. Never was there in any country an administration of more successful activity than that of Lord Dalhousie. He introduced cheap postage into India; he made railways; he set up lines of electric telegraph. Within fifteen months, according to one of his biographers, the telegraph was in operation from Calcutta to Agra, thence to Attock on the Indus, and again from Agra to Bombay and Madras. He devoted much of his attention to irrigation, to the making of great roads, to the work of the Ganges Canal. He was the founder of a comprehensive system of native education; especially female education, a matter so difficult and delicate in a country like India. He put down infanticide and the odious and extraordinary Thug system, and he carried out with vigour Lord William Bentinck's Act for the suppression of the Suttee or burning of widows on the funeral pile of their husbands. These are only some of the evidences of his unresting, all-conquering energy. They are but illustrative; they are far indeed from being exhaustive even as a catalogue. But Lord Dalhousie was not wholly en-

gaged in such works as these. Indeed, his noble and glorious triumphs over material, intellectual, and moral obstacles run some risk of being forgotten or overlooked by the casual reader of history in the storm of that fierce controversy which his other enterprises called forth. During his few years of office he annexed the Punjaub, he incorporated part of the Burmese territory in our dominions; he annexed Nagpore, Sattara, Jhansi, Berar, and Oudh. We are not called upon here to consider in detail the circumstances of each of these annexations, or to ask the reader to pass judgment on the motives and the policy of Lord Dalhousie. It is fair to say that he was not by any means the mere imperial proconsul he is often represented to be, thirsty with the ardour of a Roman conqueror to enlarge the territory of his own State at any risk or any sacrifice of principle. There was reason enough to make out a plausible case for even the most questionable of his annexations; and in one or two instances he seems only to have resolved on annexation reluctantly and because things had come to that pass that he saw no other safe alternative left to him. But his own general policy is properly expressed in his own words: 'We are lords-paramount of India, and our policy is to acquire as direct a dominion over the territories in possession of the native princes as we already hold over the other half of India.' Such a principle as this could only conduct in the vast majority of cases to a course of direct annexation, let the ruler begin by disavowing it as he will. In the Punjaub the annexation was provoked in the beginning, as so many such retributions have been in India, by the murder of some of our officers, sanctioned, if not actually ordered, by a native prince. Lord Dalhousie marched a force into the Punjaub. This land, 'the land of the five waters,' lies at the gateway of Hindostan, and was peopled by Mussulmans, Hindoos, and Sikhs, the latter a new sect of reformed Hindoos. We found arrayed against us not only the Sikhs, but our old enemies the Afghans. Lord Gough was in command of our forces. He fought rashly and disastrously the famous battle of Chillianwallah. The plain truth may as well be spoken out without periphrasis: he was defeated. But before the outcry raised in India and in England over this calamity had begun to subside, he had wholly recovered our position and *prestige* by the complete defeat which he inflicted upon the enemy at Goojrat. Never was a victory more complete in itself or more promptly and effectively followed up. The Sikhs were crushed; the Afghans were driven in wild rout back across their savage passes; and Lord Dalhousie annexed the Punjaub. He presented as one token of his conquest the famous diamond, the Koh-i-Noor surrendered in evidence of submission by the Maharajah of Lahore, to the Crown of England.

Lord Dalhousie annexed Oudh on the ground that the East India Company had bound themselves to defend the sovereigns of Oudh against foreign and domestic enemies on condition that the State should be governed in such a manner as to render the lives and property of its population safe; and that while the Company performed their part of the contract, the King of Oudh so governed his dominions as to make his rule a curse to his own people and to all neighbouring territories. Other excuses or justifications there were of course in the case of each other annexation; and we shall yet hear some more of what came of the annexation of Sattara and Jhansi. If, however, each of these acts of policy were not only justifiable but actually inevitable, none the less must a succession of such acts produce a profound emotion among the races in whose midst they were accomplished. Lord Dalhousie wanted one quality of a truly great man: he lacked imagination. He had not that dramatic instinct, that fine sympathetic insight, by which a statesman is enabled to understand the feelings of races and men differing wholly in education, habits, and principles from himself. He appeared to be under the impression that when once a ruler had established among whatever foreign people a system of government or of society better than that which he found existing there, he might count on obtaining their instant appreciation of his work and their gratefulness for it. The Sovereign of Oudh was undoubtedly a very bad ruler. His governing system, if it ought to be dignified by such a name, was a combination of anarchy and robbery. The chiefs of Oudh were reivers and bandits; the king was the head reiver and bandit. But human nature, even in the west, is not so constituted as to render a population always and at once grateful to any powerful stranger who uproots their old and bad systems and imposes a better on them by force of arms. 'A tyrant, but our masters then were still at least our countrymen,' is the faithful expression of a sentiment which had embarrassed energetic reformers before the days of Lord Dalhousie. The populations of India became stricken with alarm as they saw their native princes thus successively dethroned. The subversion of thrones, the annexation of States, seemed to them naturally enough to form part of that vast scheme for rooting out all the religions and systems of India, concerning which so many vague forebodings had darkly warned the land. Many of our Sepoys came from Oudh and other annexed territories; and little reason as they might have had for any personal attachments to the subverted dynasties, they yet felt that national resentment which any manner of foreign intervention is almost certain to provoke.

There were peculiar reasons too why, if religious and political distrust

did prevail, the moment of Lord Canning's accession to the supreme authority in India should seem inviting and favourable for schemes of sedition. The Afghan war had told the Sepoy that British troops are not absolutely invincible in battle. The impression produced almost everywhere in India by the Crimean War was a conviction that the strength of England was on the wane. The stories of our disasters in the Crimea had gone abroad, adorned with immense exaggerations, among all the native populations of Hindostan. Any successes that the Russians had had during the war were in Asia, and these naturally impressed the Asiatic mind more than the victories of France and England which were won farther off. Intelligent and quick-witted Mahomedans and Hindoos talked with Englishmen, English officers in India, and heard from them the accounts of the manner in which our system had broken down in the Crimea, of the blunders of our Government, and the shortcomings of our leaders. They entirely misinterpreted the significance of the stories that were so freely told. The Englishmen who spoke of our failures talked of them as the provoking and inexcusable blunders of departments and individuals; the Asiatics who greedily listened were convinced that they heard the acknowledgment of the national collapse. The Englishmen were so confident in the strength and resources of their country that it did not even occur to them to think that anybody on earth could have a doubt on the subject. It was as if a millionnaire were to complain to some one in a foreign country that the neglect and blunder of a servant had sent his remittances to some wrong place, and left him for the moment without money enough to pay his hotel bill, and the listener were to accept this as a genuine announcement of approaching bankruptcy. The Sepoy saw that the English force in Northern India was very small; and he really believed that it was small because England had no more men to send there. He was as ignorant as a child about everything which he had not seen with his own eyes; and he knew absolutely nothing about the strength, the population, and the resources of England. In his mind Russia was the great rising and conquering country; England was sinking into decay; her star waning before the strong glare of the portentous northern light.

Other impulses, too, there were to make sedition believe that its opportunity had come. Lord Canning had hardly assumed office as Governor-General of India when the dispute occurred between the British and Chinese authorities at Canton, and a war was imminent between England and China. Troops were sent shortly after from England to China; and although none were taken from India, yet it was well known among the native populations that England had an Asiatic war on her hands.

Almost at the same moment war was declared against Persia by proclamation of the Governor-General at Calcutta, in consequence of the Shah having marched an army into Herat and besieged it, in violation of a treaty with Great Britain made in 1853. A body of troops was sent from Bombay to the Persian Gulf, and shortly after General Outram left Bombay with additional troops, as Commander-in-Chief of the field force in Persia. Therefore, in the opening days of 1857, it was known among the native populations of India that the East India Company was at war with Persia, and that England had on her hands a quarrel with China. At this time the number of native soldiers in the employment of England throughout Northern India was about one hundred and twenty thousand, while the European soldiers numbered only some twenty-two thousand. The native army of the three Presidencies taken together was nearly three hundred thousand, while the Europeans were but forty-three thousand, of whom some five thousand had just been told off for duty in Persia. It must be owned that, given the existence of a seditious spirit, it would have been hardly possible for it to find conditions more seemingly favourable and tempting. To many a temper of sullen discontent the appointed and fateful hour must have seemed to be at hand.

There can be no doubt that a conspiracy for the subversion of the English government in India was afoot during the early days of 1857, and possibly for long before. The story of the mysterious chupatties is well known. The chupatties are small cakes of unleavened bread, 'bannocks of salt and dough,' they have been termed; and they were found to be distributed with amazing rapidity and precision of system at one time throughout the native villages of the north and north-west. A native messenger brought two of these mysterious cakes to the watchman or headman of a village, and bade him to have others prepared like them and to pass them on to another place. The token has been well described as the fiery cross of India, although it would not appear that its significance was as direct and precise as that of the famous Highland war-signal. It is curious how varying and unsatisfactory is the evidence about the meaning of these chupatties. According to the positive declaration of some witnesses, the sending of such a token had never been a custom, either Mahomedan or Hindoo, in India. Some witnesses believed that the chupatties were regarded as spells to avert some impending calamity. Others said the native population looked on them as having been sent round by the Government itself as a sign that in future all would be compelled to eat the same food as the Christians ate. Others, again, said the intention was to make this known, but to make it known on the part of the seditious, in order that the people might be prepared to resist the plans

of the English But there could be no doubt that the chupatties conveyed a warning to all who received them that something strange was about to happen, and bade them to be prepared for whatever might befall. One fact alone conclusively proves that the signal given had a special reference to impending events connected with British rule in India. In no instance were they distributed among the populations of still-existing native States. They were only sent among the villages over which English rule extended. To the quick, suspicious mind of the Asiatic a breath of warning may be as powerful as the crash of an alarm-bell or the sound of a trumpet. It may be, as some authorities would have us to believe, that the panic about the greased cartridges disconcerted, instead of bringing to a climax, the projects of sedition.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF PLASSEY.

The news of the outbreak at Meerut and the proclamation in Delhi broke upon Calcutta with the shock of a thunderclap. Yet it was not wholly a shock of surprise. For some time there had been vague anticipations of some impending danger. There was alarm in the air. There had long been a prophecy known to India that the hundredth anniversary of the battle of Plassey would see the end of English rule in Hindostan; and now the hundredth anniversary was near. There is a fine passage in Sir Henry Taylor's 'Philip van Artevelde,' in which Van Ryke says to the hero of the drama—

> If you mark, my Lord,
> Mostly a rumour of such things precedes
> The certain tidings;

and Philip musingly answers—

> It is strange—yet true
> That doubtful knowledge travels with a speed
> Miraculous, which certain cannot match.
> I know not why, when this or that has chanced,
> The smoke outruns the flash; but so it is.

The smoke had apparently outrun the flash in many parts of India during this eventful season. Calcutta heard the news of what had happened with wild alarm and horror, but hardly with much surprise.

For one or two days Calcutta was a prey to mere panic. The alarm was greatly increased by the fact that the dethroned King of Oudh was established

near to the city. At Garden Reach, a few miles down the Hooghly, the dispossessed king was living. There he lived for many years after, with his host of dependants and hangers-on round him. A picturesque writer lately described the 'grotesque structures' in which the old man, with his mania for building, 'quarters not only his people but his menagerie.' 'Tower after tower rises high above the lower buildings, on the top of each of which, comfortably quartered in a spacious den, abides a huge Bengal tiger, whose stripes glisten in the sun, in the sight of the passer-by on the river. He owns vast flocks of trained pigeons, which fly or alight at the word of command—wild but not unmusical shouts—of coolies stationed on the housetops, who appear to direct their motions by the waving of long bamboos. The inhabitants of Calcutta, when the news of the mutiny came, were convinced that the King of Oudh harboured close to their city companions more dangerous than pigeons, or even than Bengal tigers. They were sure that the place was the headquarters of rebellion, and were expecting the moment when, from the residence at Garden Reach, an organised army of murderers was to be sent forth to capture and destroy the ill-fated city, and to make its streets run with the blood of its massacred inhabitants. Lord Canning took the prudent course of having the king, with his prime minister, removed to the Governor-General's own residence within the precincts of Fort William.

There is no recklessness, no cruelty, like the cruelty and the recklessness of panic. Perhaps there is hardly any panic so demoralising in its effects as that which seizes the unwarlike members of a ruling race set down in the midst of overwhelming numbers of the subject populations, at a moment when the cry goes abroad that the subjected are rising in rebellion. Fortunately, there was at the head of affairs in India a man with a cool head, a quiet, firm will, and a courage that never faltered. If ever the crisis found the man, Lord Canning was the man called for by that crisis in India. He had all the divining genius of the true statesman; the man who can rise to the height of some unexpected and new emergency; and he had the cool courage of a practised conqueror. The greatest trial to which a ruler can be subjected is to be called upon at a moment's notice to deal with events and conditions for which there is no precedent. The second-class statesman, the official statesman, if we may use such an expression, collapses under such a trial. The man of genius finds it his opportunity, and makes his own of it. Lord Canning thus found his opportunity in the Indian Mutiny. Among all the distracting counsels and wild stories poured in upon him from every side, he kept his mind clear. He never gave way either to anger or to alarm. If he ever

showed a little impatience, it was only where panic would too openly have proclaimed itself by counsels of wholesale cruelty. He could not perhaps always conceal from frightened people the fact that he rather despised their terrors. Throughout the whole of that excited period there were few names, even among the chiefs of rebellion, on which fiercer denunciation was showered by Englishmen than the name of Lord Canning. Because he would not listen to the bloodthirsty clamours of mere frenzy, he was nicknamed 'Clemency Canning,' as if clemency were an attribute of which a man ought to be ashamed. Indeed for some time people wrote and spoke, not merely in India but in England, as if clemency were a thing to be reprobated, like treason or crime. Every allowance must be made for the unparalleled excitement of such a time, and in especial for the manner in which the elementary passions of manhood were inflamed by the stories, happily not true, of the wholesale dishonour and barbarous mutilation of women. But when the fullest allowance has been made for all this, it must be said by any one looking back on that painful time that some of the public instructors of England betrayed a fury and ferocity which no conditions can excuse on the part of civilised and Christian men who have time to reflect before they write or speak. The advices which some English journals showered upon the Government, the army, and all concerned in repressing the mutiny might more fittingly have come from some of the heroes of the 'Spanish Fury.' Nay, the Spanish Fury itself was, in express words, held up to the English army as an example for them to imitate. An English paper, of high and well-earned authority, distinctly declared that such mercy as Alva showed the Netherlands was the mercy that English soldiers must show to the rebellious regions of India. There was for awhile but little talk of repression. Every one in England well knew that the rebellion would be repressed. It has to be remembered, to the credit of England's national courage and resolve, that not at the worst moment of the crisis did it seem to have occurred to any Englishman that there was the slightest possibility of the rebellion being allowed to succeed. It is painful to have to remember that the talk was not of repression but of revenge. Public speakers and writers were shrieking out for the vengeance which must be inflicted on India when the rebellion had been put down. For awhile it seemed a question of patriotism which would propose the most savage and sanguinary measures of revenge. We shall see farther on that one distinguished English officer was clamorous to have powers given to him to impale, to burn alive, and to flay mutineers who had taken part in the murder of English women. Mr. Disraeli, to do him justice, raised his voice in remonstrance against the wild passions of the hour, even when

these passions were strongest and most general. He declared that if such a temper were encouraged we ought to take down from our altars the images of Christ and raise the statue of Moloch there; and he protested against making Nana Sahib, of whom we shall hear more, the model for the conduct of a British officer. Mr. Disraeli did, indeed, at a later period show an inclination to back out of this courageous and honourable expression of opinion; but it stands at all events to the credit of his first impulse that he could venture, at such a time, to talk of morality, mercy, and Christianity.

If people were so carried away in England, where the danger was far remote, we can easily imagine what were the fears and passions roused in India, where the terror was or might be at the door of every one. Lord Canning was gravely embarrassed by the wild urgencies and counsels of distracted Englishmen, who were furious with him because he even thought of distinguishing friend from foe where native races were concerned. He bore himself with perfect calmness; listened to everything that any one had no say, where time gave him any chance of doing so, read as far as possible all the myriad communications poured in upon him, regarded no suggestion as unworthy of consideration, but made his own resolves and his own judgment the final arbiter. He was greatly assisted and encouraged in his counsels by his brave and noble wife, who proved herself in every way worthy to be the helpmate of such a man at such a crisis. He did not for a moment under-estimate the danger; but neither did he exaggerate its importance. He never allowed it to master him. He looked upon it with the quiet resolute eye of one who is determined to be the conqueror in the struggle.

Lord Canning saw that the one important thing was to strike at Delhi, which had proclaimed itself the head-quarters of the rebellion. He knew that English troops were on their way to China for the purpose of wreaking the wrongs of English subjects there, and he took on his own responsibility the bold step of intercepting them and calling them to the work of helping to put down the mutiny in India. The dispute with China he thought could well afford to wait, but with the mutiny it must be now or never. India could not wait for reinforcements brought all the way from England. In Scott's 'Betrothed,' the soldier of the knight who owns the frontier castle encourages him, when the Welsh are about to attack, by the assurance that the forces of the constable of Chester will soon come to his aid, and that with these reinforcements they will send the Welsh dragon-flag flying from the field. The knight sadly answers that it must fly from the field before the reinforcements arrive, 'or it will fly over all our dead bodies.' Thus felt Lord Canning when he thought of the strong

arms that England could send to his assistance. He knew well enough, as well as the wildest alarmist could know, that the rebel flag must be forced to fly from some field before that help came, or it would fly over the dead bodies of those who then represented English authority in India. He had, therefore, no hesitation in appealing to Lord Elgin, the Envoy in charge of the Chinese expedition, to stop the troops that were on their way to China, and lend them to the service of India at such a need. Lord Elgin had the courage and the wisdom to assent to the appeal at once. Fortune, too, was favourable to Canning in more ways than one. The Persian war was of short duration. Sir James Outram was soon victorous, and the Persians sued for a peace. The treaty of Peace was signed at Paris in March 1857, and was arranged so quickly that Outram inflicted a crushing defeat on the Persians after the treaty was signed, but before the news of its signature had time to reach the seat of war. Outram, therefore, and his gallant companions, Colonel Jacob and Colonel Havelock, were able to lend their invaluable services to the Governor-General of India. Most important for Lord Canning's purposes was the manner in which the affairs of the Punjaub were managed at this crisis. The Punjaub was under the administration of one of the ablest public servants India has ever had—Sir John, afterwards Lord Lawrence. John Lawrence had from his youth been in the Civil Service of the East India Company; and when Lord Dalhousie annexed the Punjaub, he made Lawrence and his soldier-brother—the gallant Sir Henry Lawrence—two out of a board of three for the administration of the affairs of the newly acquired province. Afterwards Sir John Lawrence was named the Chief Commissioner of the Punjaub, and by the promptitude and energy of himself and his subordinates the province was completely saved for English rule at the outbreak of the mutiny. Fortunately, the electric telegraph extended from Calcutta to Lahore, the chief city of the Punjaub. On May 11 the news of the outbreak at Meerut was brought to the authorities at Lahore. As it happened, Sir John Lawrence was then away at Rawul Pindee, in the Upper Punjaub; but Mr. Robert Montgomery, the Judicial Commissioner at Lahore, was invested with plenary power, and he showed that he could use it to advantage. Meean Meer is a large military cantonment five or six miles from Lahore, and there were then some four thousand native troops there, with only about thirteen hundred Europeans of the Queen's and the Company's service. There was no time to be lost. If the spirit of mutiny were to spread, the condition of things in the Punjaub would be desperate; but what did the condition of things in the Punjaub involve? The possible loss of a province? Something far greater than that. It meant the possibility of a momentary collapse of all British authority in India. For if any one will take the trouble to cast a glance

at a map of India, he will see that the Punjaub is so placed as to become a basis of operations for the precise military movements which every experienced eye then saw to be necessary for the saving of our Indian Empire. The candle would have been burning at both ends, so far as regards the North-West Provinces, if the Punjaub had gone with Delhi and Lucknow. While the Punjaub held firm, it was like a barrier raised at one side of the rebellious movement, not merely preventing it from going any farther in that direction, but keeping it pent up until the moment came when the blow from the other direction could fall upon it. The first thing to be done to strike effectually at the rebellion was to make an attack on Delhi; and the possession of the Punjaub was of inestimable advantage to the authorities for that purpose. It will be seen, then, that the moment was critical for those to whose hands the administration of the great new province had been entrusted. There was no actual reason to assume that the Sepoys in Meean Meer intended to join the rebellion. There would be a certain danger of converting them into rebels if any rash movement were to be made for the purpose of guarding against treachery on their part. Either way was a serious responsibility, a momentous risk. The authorities soon made up their minds. Any risk would be better than that of leaving it in the power of the native troops to join the rebellion. A ball and supper were to be given at Lahore that night. To avoid creating any alarm it was arranged that the entertainments should take place. During the dancing and the feasting Mr. Montgomery held a council of the leading officials of Lahore, civil and military, and it was resolved at once to disarm the native troops. A parade was ordered for daybreak at Meean Meer; and on the parade-ground an order was given for a military movement which brought the heads of four columns of the native troops in front of twelve guns charged with grape, the artillerymen with their port-fires lighted, and the soldiers of one of the Queen's regiments standing behind with loaded muskets. A command was given to the Sepoys to pile arms. They had immediate death before them if they disobeyed. They stood literally at the cannon's mouth. They piled their arms, which were borne away at once in carts by European soldiers, and all chances of a rebellious movement were over in that province, and the Punjaub was saved. Something of the same kind was done at Mooltan, in the Lower Punjaub, later on; and the province, thus assured to English civil and military authority, became a basis for some of the most important operations by which the mutiny was crushed, and the sceptre of India restored to the Queen.

Within little more than a fortnight from the occupation of Delhi by the rebels, the British forces under General Anson, the Commander-in-Chief, were advancing on that city. The commander did not live to con-

duct any of the operations. He died of cholera almost at the beginning of the march. He had lived long enough to come in for much sharp censure. The temper of the time both in England and in India expected men to work by witchcraft rather than wit, and Anson was furiously denounced by some of the principal English journals because he did not recapture Delhi without having even to march an army to the neighbourhood of the city. He was described as 'a holiday soldier who had never seen service either in peace or in war.' His appointment was denounced as 'a shameless job,' and a tribute altogether to 'the claims of family and personal acquaintance.' We cannot venture now to criticise the mode of General Anson's appointment; and he had not time to show whether he was any better than a holiday soldier. But it would appear that Lord Canning had no poor opinion of his capacity, and was particularly impressed by his coolness and command of temper. He died, however, at the very outset of his march; and we only refer now to the severe attacks which were made upon him to illustrate the temper of the nation, and the manner in which it delighted to hear itself addressed. We are always rebuking other nations for their impatience and fretfulness under difficulties. It is a lesson of no slight importance for us to be reminded that when the hour of strain and pressure comes we are found to be in most ways very like our neighbours.

The siege of Delhi proved long and difficult. Another general died, another had to give up his command, before the city was recaptured. It was justly considered by Lord Canning and by all the authorities as of the utmost importance that Delhi should be taken before the arrival of great reinforcements from home. Meanwhile, the rebellion was breaking out at new points almost everywhere in these northern and north-western regions. On May 30 the mutiny declared itself at Lucknow. Sir Henry Lawrence was governor of Oudh. He endeavoured to drive the rebels from the place, but the numbers of the mutineers were overwhelming. He had under his command, too, a force partly made up of native troops, and some of these deserted him in the battle. He had to retreat and to fortify the Residency at Lucknow, and remove all the Europeans, men, women, and children, thither, and patiently stand a siege. Lawrence himself had not long to endure the siege. On July 2 he had been up with the dawn, and after a great amount of work he lay on a sofa; not, as it has been well said, to rest, but to transact business in a recumbent position. His nephew and another officer were with him. Suddenly a great crash was heard, and the room was filled with smoke and dust. One of his companions was flung to the ground. A shell had burst. When there was silence the officer who had been flung down called out, 'Sir Henry, are you hurt?'

At first there was no answer. Then a weak voice was heard to reply in just the words that Browning has put into the mouth of the gallant French lad similarly questioned by the great Napoleon. 'I am killed,' was the answer that came faintly but firmly from Sir Henry Lawrence's lips. The shell had wounded him in the thigh so fearfully as to leave surgery no chance of doing anything for his relief. On the morning of July 4 he died calmly and in perfect submission to the will of Providence. He had made all possible arrangements for his successor and for the work to be done. He desired that on his tomb should be engraven merely the words, 'Here lies Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty.' The epitaph was a simple, truthful summing up of a simple, truthful career. The man, however, was greater than the career. Lawrence had not opportunity to show in actual result the greatness of spirit that was in him. The immense influence he exercised over all who came within his reach bears testimony to his strength and nobleness of character better than any of the mere successes which his biographer can record. He was full of sympathy. His soul was alive to the noblest and purest aspirations. 'It is the due admixture of romance and reality,' he was himself accustomed to say, 'that best carries a man through life.' No professional teacher or philosopher ever spoke a truer sentence. As one of his many admirers says of him—'what he said and wrote, he did, or rather he was.' Let the bitterest enemy of England write the history of her rule in India, and set down as against her every wrong that was done in her name, from those which Burke denounced to those which the Madras Commission exposed; he will have to say that men, many men, like Henry Lawrence, lived and died devoted to the cause of that rule, and the world will take account of the admission.

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